

# Introduction

"It sounds almost unbelievable and like a cheap excuse to attribute the failure of a campaign to treason. In this case, however, one is justified in saying, and it has been proved, that treachery has played a great role since 1941 in Africa as well as In Russia, which must not be concealed today." (Otto SKO^ENY)<sup>1</sup>

## 22. **June 2011: More than 70 years have passed since the beginning of the German pre-emptive strike against Stalin passed, but decisive facts are still missing.**

Why bring up this delicate subject today? Instead of, as planned. in a short six-week blitzkrieg similar to the one against France in 1940, the war in the East developed into the most severe and bloody conflict between two states in the entire history of the world.

Countless books, films and presentations of various political tendencies have appeared on the subject One might therefore think that there is nothing new to add. This is true at least until one sets out to investigate what was actually said and not said.<sup>1</sup>

History is always susceptible to political manipulation. Second World War, which largely gave birth to our present world offers particular temptations

Thus, with the passing of the experience generation Western world since the mid-1990s, a uniform view of history about the Second World War is increasingly represented, which across all countries proclaims a superficial and American-centric view of history as truth addition, especially in the USA, language and terminology are used accuracy<sup>2</sup>

Whoever today wants to scientifically research and assess real events of the Second World War and their consequences is no longer moving completely vacuum despite the alleged freedom of the press democracy Thus, as Norman DAVIES wrote, in many Western countries the law has been invoked for some years to support an official view of history. The killer words are "obvious" and "no-alternative" truths with the force of law For example, in Great Britain war crimes are not considered war crimes if they were not committed by Germans or by former German confederates The goal today seems to be a political instrumentalization of the history of the Second World War, dominated by national, social or economic particular interests. truth is to fall by the wayside

The great war on the Eastern Front has so far been treated only very superficially by your American-oriented historiography. If things were done properly here, all books on World War II would devote three quarters of their content to the battles between Germans and Russians. Thus, even today, few seem to grasp the gigantic scale of the battle on the Eastern Front!

From September 1939 to June 1941, the German Wehrmacht had accomplished incredible things. With the exception of England, Germany had clearly defeated all enemies almost single-handedly. Apart from neutral countries such as Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, the Reich dominated all of Western, Central and Southern Europe. All eastern approaches to Central Europe, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, were under German control. HITLER possessed the finest military machinery ever devised in history.

The attack on Russia on June 22, 1941, seemed at first to repeat the success of the previously known >Blitzkriege<. Wehrmacht reports reported terrain gains and astronomical numbers of prisoners. Even in hostile foreign countries, the end of organized Soviet resistance was firmly expected in October 1941.

The German Reich could have comfortably coped with the planned short war on the Eastern Front in 1941. After a defeat of the USSR, the British would probably have had to capitulate, and our world would look different today.

However, those who were able to look behind the scenes noticed that much of everything went according to plan. An eerie feeling spread. Russian enemy seemed well informed about all German intentions, inexplicable delays, chaotic incidents, command ambiguities and supply problems were throwing sand in the hitherto well-oiled engine of the German war machine.

It therefore seems necessary to come to a comprehensive understanding, objectively and without blinkers, whether factors played a part in the German defeat by Russia which the official historiography of the Western world has so far refused to address. However, the truth about the past can only be asserted through the conflict of new arguments and old theses. It is not only about the role played by HITLER, STALIN, ROOSEVELT and CHURCHILL, but also about the activities of people who worked behind the scenes of the Third Reich for the Allied victory on the Eastern Front.

It is not about fighting the old battles of the past again and asking the >what-if-question<. Instead, the aim is to present what really happened on the German side. A valuation of all these consequences in moral or historical terms is not possible at present. Therefore, the question whether the

suspected circle of persons consists of traitors and saboteurs, on whom the blood of hundreds of thousands is stuck, can only be decided in the future precisely here that the words of former Chinese Foreign Minister CHU EN LAI apply, who during a visit to Paris in 1959, when asked about his assessment of the impact of the French Revolution, replied: "It can only be said in 200-300 years."

Thus, our world has probably only a very small part of the time behind it, which still separates us from a fundamentally objective and just assessment of the events on the Eastern Front as well

However, it is to be expected that after an expected future economic and military decline of the USA, the American-centered view of history give way to a new interest in the real events decide the war of nations between Russia and Germany

It is a fact that the war was started in the East, there it was also decided, there were with more than 20 million dead the biggest losses to carry. <sup>1</sup> It was the Western Allies who failed to democratize Europe after 1945, because the Cold War was to divide our world for another 50 years.

An unpopular fact is that even before the beginning of this struggle for life and death between Germany and Russia the Anglo-Americans had their hands in

always been true that each country has its own version of historical events proclaimed<sup>2</sup>

Each nation usually emphasizes the experiences of its own people, filtered through its own political system. In doing so, all nations knowingly or unknowingly limited the diversity of experience, hindering the presentation of a large-scale view of the whole that we call >the truth< This leads to the

Myths and legends are created, which then obscure, distort or even misrepresent the true course of events.

Unfortunately, even a liberal, democratic system is subject to such constraints, which range from economic interests and ideologies to state. Thus, it is not easy for historians, whose personal advancement often depends on state agencies or universities, to conduct objective historiography and also to publish their results.

But while after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the old Soviet Union by the new Russian truths that had been concealed and denied for decades such as the supplementary agreement to the Hitler-Stalin Pact at the beginning of August 1939 or the background of the Katyn massacre in 1940, were finally not only admitted but also objectively appreciated, the development in the democratic, liberal Federal Republic of Germany was exactly the opposite.

Already once there was the requirement of a uniform historiography.<sup>1</sup> This, however, went back to the year 1941, when the "War History Department" was formed in the High Command of the Wehrmacht. Using the language of the time for the Second World War, the following was ordered as the task of this historical research institute: "War-historical representation of the Great German Freedom Struggle from the point of view of the Supreme Wehrmacht Leadership according to the special instructions of the Fuehrer." This involved ensuring the uniformity of all military historiography in accordance with the F^ner Decree of December 18, 1940, and expressly censoring the relevant literature in accordance with special instructions.

Are we ready again?

Today, however, we are no longer at war, where censorship and propaganda have always been common. Instead of censorship there are modern >obviousnesses< which must not be shaken. Another method is that our "politically correct" politics of history claims that there is nothing new to add - this is true at most until one sets out to examine what is actually said and what is *not* said.<sup>2</sup>

How are we to understand our past if it is withheld from us? According to Hartmut SCHUSTER, the issue here cannot be whether "a little right" or "a little wrong" is said in the discovery of historical knowledge but whether the truth is told or not.

## **1. Chapter**

**>Nothing was secret anymore<  
or: Was there a systematic outflow of  
state secrets in the run-up to the Eastern campaign?**

## The American mole in the embassy

On August 23, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union had concluded the German-Soviet Pact. The piquant thing about this treaty was a secret additional protocol in which the division of Poland into spheres of interest between Germany and Russia was specified

On August 24, 1939, at about two o'clock in the morning, Reich Foreign Minister Joachim VON RIBBENTROP informed HITLER BY telephone of the conclusion of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact. It was considered a sensation worldwide.

U.S. President ROOSEVELT showed outward surprise, although he was already well informed about the contents of the agreement and the secret protocol by the betrayal of the German embassy secretary in Moscow, Hans Heinrich HERWARTH VON BOTENFELD. HERWARTH VON BOTENFELD had given a copy of the secret Additional Protocol to U.S. diplomats working in Moscow, George F. KENNAN, Charles BOHLEN, and Charles THAYER. The U.S. diplomats had already forwarded the contents to Washington by means of a coded telegram at about 12 noon on August 24.<sup>123</sup> HERWARTH VON BOTENFELD justified his betrayal in the postwar period in his best-selling memoirs **Zwischen Hitler und Stöhn** by assuming that the U.S. would immediately inform England and France as well. But the Americans would not have thought to pass on this extremely important news to the English, French and Poles. Instead, Washington informed his partners only about the status of the German-Soviet negotiations, but not about the decisive secret additional protocol that agreed on the partition of Poland

However, English post-war sources informed that VON BOTENFELD had also sent a copy of the German-Soviet pact to the English at the same time. Presumably VON BOTENFELD only forgot to mention this in his memoirs.

Hans Heinrich HERWARTH VON BOTENFELD had been second secretary of the German Embassy in Moscow since 1931, where he remained until the outbreak of war.

remained. As a strict opponent of the National Socialist state, it had filled him with despair when the British Prime Minister Neville CHAMBERLAIN visited Germany in the fall of 1938 and the Munich Agreement had come about.

After the outbreak of war, the Attache joined the Wehrmacht as a soldier at the German Embassy in Moscow. He served as a lieutenant in the only German cavalry division, with which he participated in the French campaign.

In mid-August 1940, VON BITTENFELD learned in France from his cousin Colonel Bernhard VON LOSSBERG that HITLER had ordered the preparation of a study for a possible attack on Russia.<sup>1</sup> Of course, this order was top secret and known only to a very few high officers.

When the two met again in September 1940, LOSSBERG told BITTENFELD that the plan was no longer acute at the moment. - Nevertheless, BITTENFELD made sure that even the first draft of a Russian campaign from the High Command of the Wehrmacht in late summer 1940 did not remain secret.

In the process, an almost unbelievable event took place. In the fall of 1940, the ex-diplomat HERWARTH VON BÜNFELD, WITH THE help of his diplomatic passport, which he had simply kept, and with the express consent of the commander of his cavalry regiment, first went to Moscow to buy caviar. For this purpose, the officer transformed himself into a civilian and diplomat in Warsaw before leaving by train. This is how the Americans in Moscow learned about HITLER's highly secret plans.

At the turn of the year 1940/41, HERWARTH VON BITTENFELD was in Berlin, where he worked as a Russian interpreter at the Reich Aviation Ministry (RLM), helping Colonel Dietrich SCHWENKE with studies on Soviet air armament. He also immediately passed on what he learned here in the way of secret documents to the Americans in Berlin. His contact man in the U.S. Embassy was named Sam WOODS and was officially the Secretary of Commerce. WOODS gave BITTENFELD the agent code name >JOHNNY<. Agent JOHNNY's information was considered explosive and reliable in Washington! His reports were then bundled with other information in the U.S. State Department and passed on to the Russian ambassador to the U.S., Konstantin UMANSKI, in March 1941.

HERWARTH VON BITTENFELD later served in several staff positions on the Eastern Front. His connections to July 20, 1944 are not clear, but on the day of the attack Count VON STAUFFENBERG tried to contact him. This

means that he may also have played a role among the Resistance. Fortunately for Agent JOHNNY, the contact attempt failed, as BITTENFELD was - currently in the Balkans. A kind fate then prevented his name from being passed on to the law enforcement authorities.

In May 1945, JOHNNY met his former Moscow contact Charles THAYER again at the Salzburg POW camp. They had a few drinks there, after which THAYER promptly got the release papers for JOHNNY.

In civilian life, the trusted American quickly made a career for himself in postwar Germany. After a post in the Bavarian State Chancellery, he was appointed chief of protocol in the new federal capital Bonn in 1949. There he organized the celebrations for the founding of the state. In 1955, he went to London as German ambassador. From 1965 to 1969, he was German ambassador to Rome.

After his retirement, VON BITTENFELD assumed the presidency of the German Goethe Institute and led a commission to reform the German diplomatic service. Not known whether he also provided information to the United States as an agent during his diplomatic career for the Federal Republic of Germany.

An obituary in the English *Guardian* later stated that HERWARTH VON BITTENFELD, as the first German postwar ambassador to England, had restored confidence in the new Germany. His life story showed how versatile a diplomatic life could be and how effectively HERWARTH VON BITTENFELD had served his country.

### **The German Foreign Ministry as a Nest of Conspirators**

One could now believe that the cases of >Agent JOHNNY< as well as the German ambassador in Moscow, VON DER SCHULENBURG, mentioned below, were isolated cases.

In fact, in Berlin, Ernst VON WEIZSÄCKER, as well as numerous other high officials of the Foreign Office, used part of their working time to send messengers, messages, and proposals abroad that had nothing to do with official policy, even in the pre-war period.

These diplomats also exchanged information with Admiral CA-NARIS' defenses.

Furthermore, one met with enemy legation attaches and their agents, be it in their own country, in Italy, Japan or in the neutral countries Sweden, Spain and Portugal, in order to, as Otto SKORZENY wrote, "communicate



political, economic or military information to them as quickly as possible".

The German ambassador in Tokyo, Eugen **COrr**, and Baron VON KILLINGER in Romania also made themselves suspicious. We will have to deal with VON KILLINGER in a later book.

In the case of Orr and Graf VON DER SCHULENBURG it also looks as if they >supervised< or even covered the espionage activities and betrayals of their subordinates. Orr's behavior towards the Russian master spy Dr. SORGE has remained inexplicable until today. <sup>1</sup>

Erich and Theo KORDT, as high officials of the German ForeignOfficecan claim to have committedthe first act of treasonagainst German interests in the area of the Soviet UnionThe KoRDT brothers informed the Englishman Sir Robert V ANSITIART as early as June 1939, i.e. three months before the outbreak of the Second World War, that an agreementwas to be signedbetween Germany and the Soviet Union.

Previously, STAUN had offered the English and French 120 divisions for a war against Germany, knowing that they would need his help in arms. But when it became clear that the English and French wanted to leave the main burden of this war to the SovietsSTAUN began to bet on Germany. The English now learned this through the betrayal of the KORDTS.

Agent >Johnny< and the Gehrüder KORDT - already the first shots ofthe Second World War were preceded by treason.

### **The American in the dark cinema**

The secrecy of the most secret state papers had only a very short half-life in the Berlin of 1940/41.

Not only the English learned about HITLER'S directive "Number 21< by betrayal within a few days. It became known that at the beginning of January 1941 a copy of the real >Barbarossa< directive of December 18, 1940 - was handed over in a dark Berlin cinema to the American commercial attaché Sam E. Woos by a highly placed German official.To this day, the Americans keepsecretthe name of this man known as a >Nazi opponent<<sup>2</sup>

Mind you, this was not the former Reichsbank President Hjalmar SCHACHT. SCHACHT WAS also in contact with the Americans and thus informed the First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, Donald HEATH, about the imminent attack on Russia. <sup>1</sup>

The USA immediately brought the >Warning Number 21<WashingtonAfter a delay of several months, the message reachedthe

Russian ambassador in the USA on March 20, 1941 - as a "warning from an authentic source" "We will come back to this later"

Again, the impression arises that certain circles were primarily interested in keeping the Western Allies informed and not in preventing the Eastern campaign. Even before the start of "Unternehmens Barbarossa", Helmuth James Graf von MOLTKE, head of the War and International Law Department in the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht, had described Germany's defeat as certain and absolutely necessary in a memorandum on April 24, 1941. However, this was hardly conceivable without a future war on two fronts. This also came to light in the deep frustration and despair of leading officers of the resistance after Germany's victory over France.<sup>2, 3</sup> At that time, it looked as if the Second World War was as good as over.

### **Why was Stalin not fully informed about the Allied war plans against the Soviet Union?**

The German-Russian pact of August 1939 initially developed into a real threat to the Western Allies

In the spring of 1940, English and French bomber squadrons were already ready in Syria and Iraq to fly attacks on Soviet oil fields in the Caucasus. On April 17, Germany's wartime adversaries, England and France, had agreed to strike a serious, if not decisive, blow against the military and economic organization of the Soviet Union. The start of the "Southern Plan" was decided for the turn of June/July 1940.

The air strikes were to be followed by land operations. For this purpose, the French had already supplied their Levant Army in Syria with 150,000 soldiers with state-of-the-art equipment and fully motorized.

The British wanted to lead the anti-Russian Caucasus peoples to revolution against Moscow through intelligence operations

This was nothing else than a planned war of aggression. Thus, early 1940, the democratic countries of France and England prepared a completely unprovoked invasion of the hitherto neutral Soviet Union

In preparation for the attacks, the British had flown clandestine aerial reconnaissance missions at high altitude over the oil wells of the Caucasus: a parallel to the later reconnaissance flights by the Germans and Soviets as part of their mutual invasion preparations.

Only the German attack in the West on May 16, 1940 and the collapse of France saved the world once again from this expansion of the war

Unlike HITLER's later plans against Russia, no one warned STAUN THAT an Anglo-French attack against his oil fields was in the offing. On the contrary, Russia was to learn of Anglo-French attack plans only long afterwards through Germany- even then only in a very limited form.

By chance, the Wehrmacht had obtained this compromising material. On June 16, 1940, an advance party of the 9th German Armored Division had captured the small town of La Charite on the Loire River, 200 km south of Paris. In the process, German armored scout cars captured special freight cars with steel filing cabinets. La Charite station grounds. Eventually, an entire freight train containing secret files of the French General Staff was discovered from Vincennes. Among them were the secret documents of the Caucasus operation planned by the British and the French, including aerial photographs and target maps of Batum and Poti.

Several three-engine Ju-52 transport planes brought the secret material to the Army High Command, which had been set up in Fontainebleau. Specialists from the Foreign Office then quickly dealt with the find. Intelligence officers, military officers and translators

in addition to official Anglo-French war plans such as an expansion of the war, the planned creation of as many remote fronts as possible and deliberate insidious plans to include the neutral countries of Sweden and Switzerland in waging war against Germany, the adventurous enterprise against the Soviet Union received special attention

Under the heading "A freight train of world-historical revelations," - selected parts of this file find were announced to the German public by press releases on July 3, 1940.<sup>1</sup>

Even before its publication in the press, foreign policy makers in the Reich had been thinking about how the La Charite find could be exploited politically. A "White Paper" therefore. The selection of files was compiled by the political department of the Foreign Office under the leadership of Hans Adolf VON MOLTKE, the former German ambassador in Rome and an active resister against HITLER.

The question of which processes from the files should be passed on to the Soviets and by what means was approached in a particularly delicate manner. Strikingly, State Secretary VON WEIZSÄCKER TOOK the view that the documents should not be handed over to the Russians through official diplomatic channels. Instead, they were to be given only a

selection of files through unofficial channels. Dr. Paul Karl SCHMIDT, later known under the pseudonym Paul CARELL, took over this task and passed the material on to the Berlin Tass correspondent FILLIPOV.

However, FILLIPOV was given only two file folders with copies of the captured documents. These had again been selected by Hans Adolf VON MOLTKE. MOLTKE proceeded in a censorious manner and justified this with the instruction to separate out the documents allegedly incriminating German policy in its relationship to the Soviet Union and to withhold them from the Soviet side. Door and gate were thus opened to manipulation!

A complete official notification of the Soviet Union would have been necessary simply because handing over of the files took place at a time when German-Soviet relations already subject to severe wear and Soviet buildup of troops in the East, the Finnish War, the occupation of the Baltic states, and the takeover of Bessarabia

At that time, the English tried to lure Russia with far-reaching offers by appointing Sir Stafford Cripps as the new ambassador. What could have been more obvious for the German than to prove to the Russians with whom they were negotiating by the exact and complete presentation of the genuine Anglo-French documents?

We will never know whether, had the Russian leadership been fully aware of planned attacks by the British and French, it would have agreed with the joint action against Britain in the Middle East proposed by Hitler and Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop in November 1940.

A disclosure of the complete files through official diplomatic channels would certainly have been convincing here, and it stands in stark contrast to the original files leaked to Americans and English by German traitors

So it remained piecemeal. Nevertheless, Staun became suspicious of the English and remained so until the end of the war. But that was all that the >sorted< surrender of the attack plans brought about. Russians continued their advance on Germany's eastern border

post-war period, the French tried to hide all information about the >Operation Magique<, as the Western Allied plans against Russia were called in 1940

The files from La Charité had been moved near Ebersdorf in Thuringia in March 1945. In April 1945, the place was occupied by the Americans. Before the files could be sifted through by the U.S. Army, a French commando took them back to France in a lightning operation. The compromising material was immediately blocked, and to this day the

Paris government very reluctant to grant permission to use the documents that fell into the hands of the Wehrmacht at La Charite

Thus, only a part of the sources is accessible until today. Only after their complete release will it become clear which parts of the files were withheld from the Russians by VON WEIZSÄCKER and VON MOLTKE.

It is thought-provoking that until the discovery of the La Charite files, neither Admiral CANARIS' Abwehr nor the >Foreign Armies West Department of the OKH< were aware of - or did not want to be aware of - any of the Western Allies' plans to attack Russia because even later major Allied undertakings such as the landing in Morocco in November 1942 or the invasion of Sicily in the summer of 1943 >took the German intelligence services in the West "completely by surprise".

the old intelligence motto applies: there are always coincidences, but there are no two coincidences alike, or even fewer three coincidences alike

Stalin's purchasing commission: they knew everything  
and no one asked how.

After the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact on August 23, 1939, and the Border and Friendship Treaty on September 28 of the same year, intensive German-Russian economic cooperation began.

for the supply of valuable raw materials and metals, Germany undertook to agree to a Soviet list of demands, which included mainly high technology of the time. On February 11, 1940, the German-Soviet Economic Treaty was signed. It provided for Soviet deliveries of raw materials to Germany totaling 420 to 430 million Reichsmarks within 12 months. In return, Germany received lists of goods from the Russians detailing the individual items and delivery dates. They included weapons, armaments and key technologies as well as industrial equipment and devices of the most modern kind.

From May to December 1940, the Soviet Union acquired in Germany in this way 2800 machine tools worth 54 million Reichsmarks, new military technology and armaments for 36 million Reichsmarks, and coal for 41 million Reichsmarks.

In the first half of 1941, the most modern models of aircraft, artillery systems, and naval technology were delivered to Russia in significant quantities - all goods that the Reich's war effort itself would have urgently needed.

More than 300 firms (not including suppliers) were involved in the execution of the Soviet orders; for reasons of secrecy, they did not learn

of >Barbarossa< until June 22, 1941.<sup>12</sup> At the outbreak of war Soviet orders worth 600 million Reichsmarks were still in German production, thus blocking a not inconsiderable part of Germany's armament capacity. It has never been precisely explained why Germany, despite shortages in the equipment of its own armed forces, was prepared to accept this obstruction of its own war armament in favor of a potential enemy. To explain this by saying that HITLER was only interested in smooth handling of the German-Soviet internal traffic certainly too short-sighted.

Among the deliveries for the Soviets were heavy warships such as the cruiser >Lützow< and the plans for the battleships of the >Bismarck< class.

Germans were surprised to find that the Russians were suspiciously well acquainted with German industry. HITLER explained to Henry PICKER THAT WHEN THE Russian specialists came to buy a machine and were shown everything in the factories concerned, they explained that they wanted to see the model machines parked in a certain corner, in a certain hall, could identify precisely.<sup>1</sup>

He also reported an incident in December 1939 at the secret complex of the Bremen Aircraft Works in Lemwerder, where a Soviet commission wanted to see instead of the >Ladenhüter< allegedly shown to them, a latest German battle plane design precisely designated by them. Even the hangar number, in which the product type was written, was known to them. In addition, the Russians were also familiar with - unknown remote-controlled weapons such as the German small tank >Go-liath< and the German large-capacity transporter Messerschmidt W 323 >Giant<. Most of all, however, HITLER WAS annoyed by Soviet spying on the German rocket launchers developed by General Walter DORNBERGER for ground combat and tank warfare with 5 to 6 bundled tubes of 15 cm caliber.

In the spring of 1941, members of a Russian officers' commission appeared better informed than their authoritative German counterparts. Thus, as described elsewhere, General GUDERIAN DESCRIBED how, in the spring of 1941, a Russian officers' commission, with HITLER'S permission, inspected the German tank schools and tank factories.

and embarrassed the German hosts in the process. HITLER had ordered to show everything to the Russians. In doing so, he said, the Russian officers, looking at the German Panzer IV would not have it represented the heaviest German type. According to GUOERIAN, they had repeatedly stated that the Germans were hiding from them their latest designs, which HITLER had promised to show - them. Such was the intrusiveness of the commission, he said, that the German manufacturers and Waffenamt officers finally said, "The Russians themselves seem already to have heavier and better types than we have."

In fact, these incidents show that the Russians first-hand treason information. In the case of the prototype aircraft in Bremen, it was the prototype of the Focke-Wulf >FW 189 V-1< battle plane, the main competitor of the later German standard battle plane Henschel >HS 129<

visit of the officers' commission with the intrusive tank requests was about the fact that the Russians wanted to see the latest German tank combat vehicle prototypes DW2, VK.3001 H and P. These types already existed as test vehicles at that time, and there were also already plans for a VK 6501 (A) and VK.4501 heavy tank combat vehicle (the later >Tiger< tank combat vehicle). GUOERIAN DID not know about the existence of these vehicles.

The Soviet side was concerned here with recognizing the functioning of the latest German weapon systems. We remember here the Russian tank >T 34<, the battle plane >Il 2< and the rocket launcher >BM-13<, the so-called >Stalin organ<.

PICKER said that the excellent information provided by the Russians...

about the latest state of German developments was a consequence of the system of informers. By organizing communism Russia had thus created an informer system that still functioned excellently at that time

In reality, however, this was not the fruit of the work of Communist underground organizations in the respective armaments factories but information from the highest circles in authorities such as the Ministry of Economics and Finance, the Army Weapons Office, and the Reich Aviation Ministry.

The warning signs that sinister treachery and espionage favor of the Soviet Union were taking place in Germany were again present even before the start of the Eastern campaign

### **Was the planned German railroad deployment betrayed to Stalin?**

The rapid buildup of troops by the Russians in Poland in the spring of 1940 aroused the worst fears among the German leadership.

In the summer of 1940, the company therefore began its own preparations for a possible battle on the Eastern Front. The >Otto Program< provided for considerable expansion measures on the railroad lines in occupied Poland (Generalgouvernement). Loading ramps for tanks were also built<sup>1</sup>

The definitive German troop deployment in the spring of 1941 then required 33,000 trains. Although considerable traffic problems in the hinterland and temporary freight train jams on the tracks of the eastern Reichsbahndirektionen could not be avoided, the German deployment on the eastern front by rail was a masterstroke

STALIN, however, had been up to date on German planning for the use of railroads long before that. As early as the end of July 1940, when HITLER requested the German General Staff to provide information on the efficiency of the German Reichsbahn for troop transports from west to east, the Ministry of Transport this was immediately transmitted to Moscow by high-ranking traitors. The diary of the Soviet intelligence service speaks a clear language here<sup>2</sup>

These were among the first concrete indications of the planned eastern campaign, which flowed off to the Russians.

At that time, very few of those responsible on the German side might even have known that something unusual was planned in the East

### **Uncovered contrails in the sky**

From 1935 to the first half of 1941, the Germans carried out well over 500 - reconnaissance flights over Russia. On the part of the Germans, in response to



objections from the Russians, it was explained that the young German pilots had lost their way in their >inexperience< or had suffered material damage. These lies were thought to be so successful that in the post-war period it was claimed for a long time that the Russians had noticed anything at all about the true nature of the German reconnaissance flights over their country.

If illusions still existed at all on the Soviet side concerning the true nature of the German flights, they were dispelled by Soviet agents Starschina (code name for SCHULZE-BOYSEN) and Korsikanets (code name for Arvid **HARNACK**) in radio messages from Berlin to their headquarters no later than January 1941.<sup>1</sup> Starschina's first report described a large-scale effort to photograph the entire border region of the western USSR, including Leningrad and Kronstadt, from the air, using improved cameras. The results would then be used to produce accurate maps of the Soviet Union and to advance further operational planning. The squadron that conducted this photo reconnaissance, he said, was known as >Revel Squadron<, after its commander, REVEL.<sup>2</sup> THE unit's main base was Oranienburg, where, according to its name, the squadron conducted high-altitude experiments. It flew its reconnaissance missions, Starschina said, from air bases in Bucharest, Königsberg, and Kirkenes in northern Norway. Photography takes place at an altitude of 6000 m, and the films are of excellent quality, he said.

The reports of the >Red Chapel< should have ended all doubt about the Soviet leadership about the true nature of the German missions over their country. The Soviets paid the Germans back in kind anyway, and for their part systematically made >erroneous flights< beyond their borders on reconnaissance missions.

But even without this betrayal information, the short contrails of the high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft were visible from the ground even to the naked eye. The strategically important targets on the ground, which seemed to magically attract these >flight students<, also spoke for themselves.

Today it is claimed that STALIN, IN ORDER not to induce Germany to strike prematurely, forbade his own air force to systematically hunt German air reconnaissance aircraft. However, even if they had wanted to, a serious obstruction of German reconnaissance missions would have completely overwhelmed the Russian capabilities of the time.

With the long distances, largely absent radar surveillance, little heavy flak outside the population centers, and with an assortment of fighters inadequately equipped for high-altitude flights, this was simply not possible. The Russians had tried to get to the altitude of the German aircraft with an I-153 pressurized biplane, but this I-130 only got to 10700 meters and was much too slow. One would have captured the altitude range of the much faster Do-215, but for the frequently used Ju-86 with a peak altitude up to

14400 meters, this effort was completely in vain. The Soviets' first modern fighter, the Yakovlev Yak-1, also only managed 10,000 meters, and the best aircraft of the time, the Mig-1, was equipped for high-altitude flights, but reached the heights of the Ju-86 far too slowly to be of any use.<sup>3</sup>

In this respect, the acts of treason of the >Rote Kapelle< in Berlin seemed to be of great concern to the pilots of the RowEHL squadrons.

Only one case is known in which a German Ju-86 high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft was forced to land by a Soviet fighter. On April 15, 1941, the Ju-86 with the civil registration D-APIW had taken off on a long-range reconnaissance flight to the Shitomir-Kiev area. At an altitude of 10,000 meters the right engine jerkily stopped. After the left engine of the Ju-86 also began to run erratically, the flight altitude dropped to 600 meters. Only at this altitude did the Ju-86 encounter a Soviet fighter, which tried to force the damaged aircraft to land by approaching several times. As the German pilot tried to slowly disappear into a lower cloud front, the Russian fighter got behind the Ju and destroyed its left engine with bursts of fire. As a result, the Ju-86 had to make an emergency landing on Russian territory, which caused a minor diplomatic scandal.

Already in 1937 a camouflaged >air spy<-He 111 had crashed over Russia. This does not seem to have triggered any reaction from the Soviets.

As early as 1937, a Heinkel He 111 C reconnaissance aircraft had been lost by accident over Russia. Until the eve of the war He 111s disguised as commercial aircraft >Lufthansa< (DLH) flew few times on important routes such as the Berlin-Moscow route. Since 1940 at the latest, the Russians knew what was really going on - thanks to a traitor in the Reich Aviation Ministry. The use of commercial aircraft as camouflaged military reconnaissance aircraft was not a German specialty. French and the English also flew such systematic missions - even over the Soviet Russian sphere of influence. After 1945, the West used commercial aircraft on a large scale for reconnaissance missions over the Eastern sphere of influence, resulting in several tragic incidents with many deaths. In contrast to the years 1939-1941, such flights were no longer tolerated by the potential Russian enemy. One should have experienced, what could be caused by such reconnaissance missions... (Source: >Roden< No. 009)

It is clear today that the Soviet leadership knew exactly what the Germans wanted to air over their country. Apart from diplomatic protests, however, no systematic defense against the German reconnaissance planes took place. Also, the Soviets probably did not want a dispute with the Germans that would have jeopardized the Red Army's own deployment on the borders.

Moreover, at the same time, Russian reconnaissance aircraft systematically flew in over German, Romanian, Bulgarian, Finnish and Hungarian territory and were not attacked.

The only exception was Romania. Due to the tensions stemming from the Soviet occupation of Bessarabia in 1940, the atmosphere of the Soviet-Romanian demarcation line was very heated. Fierce air battles over Romanian and Soviet territory were the result of this turbulent interwar period. In addition, the Romanian Bristol-Blenheim reconnaissance planes were not as capable as their German counterparts and could therefore be intercepted more easily.<sup>1-2</sup>

Nevertheless, it was the Romanian reconnaissance teams who made important discoveries over the . Important discoveries were made over the southern part of Russia.

### **The Russian counterpart to Rowehl's aerial reconnaissance missions<:**

#### **Why did they take place at all?**

Even if it is not mentioned gladly in the historiography today, Soviet reconnaissance planes flew over the territory of the Axis powers in 1941 just as >erroneously< as ROWEHL's planes over Russia. The German reconnaissance specialist PEMLER himself witnessed how condensation trails of high-flying Russian reconnaissance planes were part of everyday life in Hungary in the spring of 1941.<sup>3</sup>

With the exception of the Romanian border area, no one on the Axis territory tried to shoot down the Russian planes, just as the Russians had orders to spare the German reconnaissance planes, but not the Romanian ones. Analogously to the Russian the German Foreign Ministry protested just as hypocritically about the border violation by Soviet planes.

Over German territory >flew< not only ordinary pilots, but also commanders of much higher rank. Thus, the commander of the 73rd Fighter Division of the Special Military District West, Major General of the Air Force G.N. SACHA

ROW, the German troops from above and described: "It gives the impression that in the depths of the territory here a movement had arisen, which was piling up here directly at the border, against which it was burning as against an invisible obstacle, ready to spill over at any moment. "<sup>1</sup> Another well-known pilot flew along the entire demarcation line between Russia and Germany on June 21, 1941, and was able to provide a complete picture of how the Germans were pushing <sup>their</sup> bridge-building material forward.

As in the case of the Luftwaffe, the Soviets also had to make emergency landings of reconnaissance aircraft in enemy territory in the course of numerous missions. Romanian sources report here about the recovery of such a Soviet >spy plane< during the night of April 16-17, 1941. night reconnaissance biplane Polikarpov U- 2 (>White 3<), factory number 4856, painted darkundersideshad to go downat that time because of engine problemstwo kilometers from the village of Negrilesti, north of Tecuci, about 60 kilometers west of the Pruth River The crew abandoned their damaged aircraft and set off on foot toward the border. While photos of the U-2 night reconnaissance plane that made a forced landing exist, it is unknown what became of the crew in the end. <sup>2</sup>

In addition to night reconnaissance aircraft, the Soviets usedfast fightersfor short-rangemissions for their recmissionsover the territory of the Axis powerswell as high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft of the SB- 2

They confirmed the treason reportsand preparedRussian large-scale attack >Operation Thunderstorm<:

This Polikarpov U-2 night reconnaissance biplanehad to be grounded due to engine problemsthe night of the 16th/17th.

April 1941 in Romania  
Petliakov Pe-2  
reconnaissance aircraft  
with experimental pre-war camouflage paint schemeThese fast long-range reconnaissancewere almost impossible for the early German BF- 1 09E  
~ ~ ~

type (at that time holder of the world altitude record of 12000 meters) and fast reconnaissance aircraft of the Pe-2 type for long-range flights

Even though the Soviet aerial photographs have never been published to this day, so as not to jeopardize the image created by the propaganda of the peaceful completely surprised Soviet Union, it can be assumed that STALIN's military had probably almost as accurate a picture of the enemy as the Germans: one of the many parallels of the marches between Germany and Russia in 1941.

### **No trace of surprise: 120 times betrayal of the attack plans!**

As blatant as the betrayal of the attack plans by CANAMS and VON BITTENFELD may seem, this represents only mosaic pieces of a larger plot.

According to the former Soviet ambassador in Bonn, Valentin FAUN, the Soviet Union's military reconnaissance unit, the RU, received more than 120 reports on HITLER's intention to go to war against the Soviet Union alone by June 1941.<sup>1</sup>

The chronological order of the most important warnings to the Soviets not issued by CANAMS is instructive:

**25. June 1940:** The British Prime Minister Winston CHURCHILL writes a long warning letter to STAUN, when the first plan for >Unternehmen Barbarossa< does not even exist yet!<sup>2</sup> STAUN considered CHURCHILL AS a liar since then!

**27. August 1940:** RU report from Paris: "The Germans have renounced an offensive against England. The preparations, which apparently continue because of such a necessity, are intended only to camouflage the movements of German troops to the east, where 106 divisions are already located."<sup>3</sup>

**October 1940:** >Korsikanets< (code name for the German resistance officer Arvid HARNACK at the German Ministry of Economics in Berlin) reports that he had learned from one source that Germany would go to war after the first month of the coming year, and from another source that the war would come in six months.

**October 7, 1940:** The Soviet ambassador in Berlin, DEKANOOZOV, receives an anonymous letter stating that HITLER intends "to attack the USSR next spring."

**December 29, 1940:** >Ariets< (code name for Rudolf VON SCHELIHA, agent first at the German Embassy in Warsaw, later at the German Foreign Ministry) reports: "War will be declared in March 1941."

**4. January 1941:** >Ariets< conveys that he had learned from a friend in the military that HITLER had approved a "highly secret" order, known only to a few people, to prepare for war against the USSR. (Note: This is likely to be Führer Instruction 21 for >Fall Barbarossa<, issued in only nine copies on 18 December 1940).

**February 7, 1941:** Agent >Teffi< (code name for an agent working in the Greek Embassy) reports: "There are growing rumors of a German attack against the Soviet Union. There are two versions here. The first is that it will come after the defeat of England, the second, the more probable, that Germany will attack the Soviet Union first."

**21. February 1941:** >Dora< (code name for Alexander RAOO in Switzerland) reports that "the German offensive will begin at the end of May". (Note: This was the date first envisaged by the Germans. It had to be postponed for more than a month because of the necessary intervention in the Balkans).

**28. February 1941:** >Ariets< mentions that three German army groups are preparing to attack the Soviet Union: "The start of the attack is provisionally set for May 20."

**14. March 1941:** A German major tells a military attaché: "We are changing our plan completely. We are going east, against the USSR. We will take wheat, coal and oil from the USSR."

**20. March 1941:** Sumner WELLES notifies the Russian Ambassador to the United States, UMANSKY, that the United States has authentic information that "it is the intention of Germany to attack Russia". (Note: This is likely to be the information that the Western Allies had received from the German resistance).

**March 28, 1941:** The secretary of the Russian ambassador in Berlin, DEKANOV, receives a telephone call: "Around May the war against Russia will begin."

**April 2, 1941:** >Starshina< (code name of Harro SCHULZE-BOYSEN, agent in the RLM) describes an air force deployment plan. "Some think it will happen in May, others in June."

**April 4, 1941:** >Harry< (code name for Henry ROBINSON, Paris) reports from France that the Germans are no longer considering invading England, but will only continue to bombard the country.

**April 6, 1941:** >Dora< learns from high-ranking government officials in Berlin that they expect the campaign to begin on June 15.

The Soviet ambassador in Berlin, DEKA-NOZOV. He received from same person total of three warning letters last one contained rather precise information: "The German army is ready. As in France, the Red Army is to be destroyed by encirclement; .. The German High Command has worked out following encirclement plan. Simultaneous advance from East Prussia and Romania. From East Prussia along the Memel, the Wilija, the Berezina from Borisov to the Teterev, and from Romania from the area south and southeast of Czernowitz northward to the Teterev and the Berezina. Altogether, a total deployment of at least 15 million men is to be expected. . . »

**April 9/10, 1941:** >Jun< (code name for a U.S. Embassy agent in Moscow) states that Germany will invade the USSR after the war with Yugoslavia.

**15. April 1941:** Ambassador Laurence STEINHARDT (U.S. Embassy in Moscow) meets with Solomon LOZOVSKY, representative in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, and asks that Foreign Minister - MOLOTOV BE informed as follows: "Beware of Germany. .more to this than simple rumors; it would be madness Germany to take this step, but they can hm."

**18. April 1941:** II FEDIUNSKI, commander of the 15th Rifle Corps, reports that a German sergeant came over through the Soviet lines on April 18 and announced that the German invasion would begin at 4 a.m. on June 22. (Note: This is exactly what happened.)

**19. April 1941:** CHURCHILL warns STALIN directly of German invasion plans.

**23. April 1941:** Vladimir VRANA, an RU agent employed by the export department of the Skoda Works in Prague, reports: "It is believed that HIRER WILL attack the USSR in the second half of June." >Vrach< (code name for a source in Bucharest) reports that the war will begin in May and should end in July

**26. April 1941:** The RU Resident Office in Helsinki reports that highly placed German officers are convinced that HITLER will attack the USSR.

**5. May 1941:** Richard SORGE, the notorious agent of the Soviet Union, sends a microfilm containing a telegram from Foreign Minister VON RIBBENTROP to the German ambassador in Tokyo, ^Or. It states, "Germany will begin a war against the Soviet Union in mid-June 1941."

Agent >Avs< (code name for Kurt VÖLKISCH, agent in Warsaw and Bucharest) reports, "The date for German military missions against the Soviet Union was to be May 15.... It has now been postponed until mid-June." >Avs< learned from his source General GERSTENBERG (German military mission Romania) that "the month of June would see the beginning of the war."

**May 9, 1941:** TUPIKOV, military attaché and legal representative of the RU in Berlin reports, "The defeat of the Red Army should be complete within a month or a month and a half with the arrival of the German Army at the Moscow border."

Agent >Margarit< (code name for an agent in the embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria) reports on German attack plans in June: "Germany is preparing to initiate hostilities against the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, before the harvest begins."

**May 11, 1941:** >Starshina< reports, "The First Air Fleet will be the main carrier of operations against the USSR."



**15. May 1941:** Agent SORGE radios from Tokyo that the war will begin on June 21 or 22.

**May 19, 1941:** The German ambassador in Moscow, Friedrich-Werner Graf VON DER SCHULENBURG, along with his confidant, Embassy Counselor Gustav HILGER, and Embassy Secretary Gebhardt VON WALTHER, meet with the Soviet ambassador in Berlin, Vladimir DEKANAZOV, and his translator, V. P. PAVLOV. DEKANAZOV and the well-known interpreter and STAUN confidant PAVLOV - were on vacation in Moscow in May 1941. It is said today that VON DER SCHULENBURG and HILGER wanted to warn DEKANAZOV of HITLER'S intention to start a war with the USSR. In doing so, they named the exact date of the German attack. The invited Soviet ambassador to Berlin, DEKANAZOV, kept asking the two German diplomats whether they were acting on behalf of the German government, because otherwise he could not pass on their communications to the Soviet government. In reality, the Soviet ambassador may have been surprised at the naiveté of his German hosts. DEKANAZOV immediately reported the details of the conversations to BERIYA (the Soviet intelligence chief), who replied that Germany was currently trying to blackmail the USSR.

The secret meeting between SCHULENBURG and HILGER and DEKANAZOV and PAVLOV became known only through a publication by Soviet General NEKRITSCH and historian Georgi KUMANEV in June 1989.

Subsequently, during a major General Staff discussion on February 16, 1966, on the subject of "June 22, 1941," Russian General DASHICHEV STATED that the German Ambassador VON DER SCHULENBURG betrayed his own fatherland and that SCHULENBURG not only said in the conversation that Germany would attack the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 but that the Ambassador cried and demanded that the Red Army prepare for battle to prevent HITLER FROM carrying out his plan. "

**11 June 1941:** >Starshina< reports that GÖRING will move its headquarters to Romania: "The question of an attack against the USSR is now definitely decided. One should consider the possibility of a surprise attack"

**June 13, 1941:** Agent SORGE: "I repeat: Nine armies with a strength of 150 divisions will begin an offensive at dawn on June 22."

**15. June 1941:** The Soviet defense chief GOLIKOV receives the "Report Number 5 of June 15, 1941". It contains precise information about the German troops, which extended into the border regions of the Baltic Sea, West and Kiev up to 400 km into Germany. Years later, GOLIKOV - remarked in 1969, "We also knew exactly about the strengths of the German troops in Romania and Finland. From RU intelligence reports we knew the date of the invasion, and every time we postponed it, we reported this in our guide. We learned all the strategic plans and blueprints for an attack against the Soviet Union had been drawn up for the German General Staff. The chief of these was the infamous >Barbarossa Plan<."

**16. June 1941:** >Starshina<: "All preparations in Germany for an armed

attack against the Soviet Union are complete, and the blow can be expected at any moment."

American Journalist Alice LEONE-MOATS tells everyone at the American Embassy in Moscow that German Embassy Secretary Gebhardt VON WALTHER TOLD her the attack was coming on June 21.

**June 19, 1941:** Willi LEHMANN (Gestapo agent at the RU) reports that the attack will begin on June 22, 1941, at about 3 a.m. The same is confirmed by Soviet agents in Helsinki.

**21. June 1941:** >KhVS< (code for Gerhard KEGEL, German Embassy Moscow) reports that the German attack against Russia will begin between 3 and 4 a.m. on June 22.

Leopold TREPPER (illegal RU agent in Paris) radios that, "tomorrow, 22. June, Germany would suddenly attack the Soviet Union".

That same evening, German deserters swimming through the Bug River at night revealed that the German attack would begin at dawn

So it is probably fair to say that there has hardly ever been a secret event in history that has been betrayed as often as the German pre-emptive strike against Russia!

Of course, it could be argued that the significance of these warnings was very small in view of the successes that the Wehrmacht nevertheless achieved in the East in the summer of 1941.

This must be countered with the question of how our world would probably look today if the German High Command had received the same information about the place and time of the Allied invasion of France in 1944.

### **>Ultra< detects the German deployment. What role did the English radio reconnaissance really play**

?

Fascinated, the British, hard pressed by the German Wehrmacht, Kriegsmarine, and Luftwaffe, noted via their >Ultra< radio reconnaissance in the spring of 1941 that Germany was turning more to the east.

Besides the at least partial decryption of the Luftwaffe Enigma code, the British were able to read secret codes of the German Reichsbahn at that time, which were based on older Enigma versions. Thus, the >Ultra< intelligence on the German buildup in the East came to a considerable extent from this source. The UK planners thus had an accurate view of each day's events, right down to redeployments and orders.<sup>1-4</sup>

>Ultra< made it possible to monitor the ever-growing German buildup for >Unternehmen Barbarossa< just as it had been possible to monitor the development and cancellation of >Unternehmen Seelöwe< (invasion of

England) a few months earlier

Armies upon armies, army groups, eventually accumulated such a mass of intelligence that the British at Bletchley Park, the base of the decryptors, laid out maps on which, with dozens of flags, a complete picture of the Wehrmacht's deployment could be plotted.

The problem for the English was how to use the news they gained. English Prime Minister CHURCHILL rejoiced knowing that England would not have to face a German invasion for the time being.

When a number of British generals were allowed to view the >Ultra< maps, some did not believe what they saw. They assumed that enemy intelligence of this type and precision was simply not available. The rest felt that if what they saw was true, the Russians would be finished in a few weeks.

On June 10, 1941, 12 days before the German offensive, the British once again tried to tell the Russians their accumulated intelligence about the German advance. For this purpose, the Soviet ambassador in England, ^iniSKY, was asked to the Foreign Office of the United Kingdom. The English provided the Russians with documents containing accurate data and figures. In the end, the Russian ambassador was asked: "The Prime Minister urges them to give all these data to the Soviet government."

It was clear to the British that Russia could be quickly overrun by the disciplined and efficient German military machine. HITLER'S plan succeeded. The fear was that, after eliminating Russia, HITLER would finally turn west and force the British to surrender even before the United States could enter the war. Therefore, it was vital for the British to warn STALIN as accurately as possible to let the Germans fall into the trap.

In the spring of 1941, after >Ultra< reconnaissance reports, it was noted with satisfaction that Ro^MMEL's Afrika Korps only insufficient reinforcements via the Mediterranean because of preparations for the Eastern campaign. The war on two fronts cast its shadow ahead.

Basically, the Soviets did not need the Western warnings, since they had long since received their own information about the German plans from countless other sources.

**Betrayal for Germany? >Müller's Werther< in the Kremlin or:  
there Gestapo agents in the highest Russian leadership,  
and what became of their findings?**

Until now, it was considered incomprehensible why the German leadership suddenly turned its gaze to the east just the decision on a

German invasion of southern England was about to be made in 1940

How could HITLER have thought of opening a new front in the East before the defeated enemy in the West was completely finished?

Certainly we know that HITLER had relied on false reports from Admiral CANARIS about the alleged strength of the English defenses and did not allow a possible promising German invasion of southern England in the summer of 1940. But this still did not make clear why it should suddenly go against the "ally STAUN.

Possibly, however, there is an explanation for this very fact. In 1948, for example, Gestapo chief Heinrich MÜLLER reported to American CIC agents in Switzerland that the Gestapo had been able to establish astonishing contacts right up to the highest Russian leadership circles in the Kremlin'.

In-house responsible for domestic surveillance, Gestapo people also tried to find out the intentions of foreign intelligence agencies

In the case of Russia, according to the former Gestapo chief, they had succeeded penetrating into the highest Communist party circles and recruiting >high-quality agents< there MÜLLER was very proud of this in the postwar period. In this way he had been able to infiltrate some areas of STALIN'S command structure and thus had known more, better and earlier than the German Abwehr of Admiral CANARIS. Even in the post-war period, some of MÜLLER'S people had still been in corresponding posts. This might particular interest to the CIC

MUELLER'S information, according to the U.S. report, had tremendous implications for what happened next in World War II.

Thus, the Gestapo experienced firsthand how STAUN was frightened in the summer of 1940 because the Western campaign had ended so quickly and victoriously for Germany. Russia, on the other hand, had expected a long war similar to the one fought on the Western Front in 1914/18. STAUN told MUELLER'S contacts that he would advance into Germany when Germany and its Western enemies were bled dry. He wanted the Ruhr, he said, and if he could reach it easily, he would grab it. STALIN would not fight, however, if he had to fear being defeated. In fact, Soviet military officials reported after the war that such an attack had been planned in case of a German landing attempt in England. probably would have come as well if the French campaign had extended into the fall of 1940 - beforehand.<sup>2</sup>

But when the Russian leader saw how quickly the Western campaign was passing, he feared that HITLER himself might attack before he himself was ready. Therefore, STAUN had started a very effective Russian rearmament program. When MUELLER PRESENTED the evidence of this rearmament program and

had STALIN'S aggressive plans in his hands, he communicated this to his boss Reinhard HEYDRICH in a long report. This ensured that HEYDRICH could not ignore this information. For if STAUN had attacked, MÜLLER could have pointed out his formal warning. It would then have been over for HEYDRICH if he had not forwarded MÜLLER's reports. Of course, HEYDRICH knew this and passed on the material.

According to MÜLLER, this took place at the beginning of June 1940. At that time, there were just six divisions of the Wehrmacht in the East!

It is conceivable that there is a connection here with HITLER'S early thoughts in the summer of 1940 of having to knock down Russia before the Reich could finally deal with England.

More information was therefore desired from the leadership. According to MÜLLER, when he was given further definite evidence of Stalin's serious military machinations against Germany, HITLER probably came to the conclusion that he had better finish STAUN off first before STAUN could finish him off. HEYDRICH had repeatedly said this to MÜLLER. HITLER later confirmed the same to him personally.

Alternatively, we know today that HITLER DID not rule out a further agreement with Russia despite the ordered Russian march in the East. During the Berlin visit of the Soviet Foreign Minister MOLOTOV in November 1940, however, corresponding negotiations failed because of Russian territorial demands. On February 9, 1941, HITLER indicated to the head of the OKW that there was still plenty of time before a decision on a German attack. One wanted to wait first whether the Russians would not react with concession to the German advance, which they had surely recognized.<sup>1</sup> The secret negotiations between Germany and Russia then continued.<sup>2</sup> Tragically, they failed shortly before the start of the German attack.

MÜLLER was able to obtain factory production figures through his agents in the Kremlin and also provided a great deal about Soviet troop strengths and deployments on the border with the German sphere of influence. Even then it had been clear that the Russian forces were so large would have been difficult to stop them once they had managed a breakthrough.

For this reason, HITLER had decided to take on STAUN first, if possible, and had instructed his staff officers to have the appropriate plans drawn up.

But the Germans would have learned through their Russian agents that there was a leak in the Reich and that STAUN had gotten wind of Germany's plans.

HEYDRICH therefore instructed Heinrich MÜLLER THAT A way had to be found quickly to convince STAUN that the German troop movements to the east were only a kind of deception against England. Otherwise, STALIN might attack before Germany was ready.

MÜLLER told his U.S. interviewee that he had known even then that the leaks were in the German military planning apparatus.

MÜLLER then succeeded, through a diplomat in the Balkans, in giving STAUN the impression that the British were lying about a German attack in order to induce the Russian leader to break his alliance with HITLER.

This was the kind of double deception with which STAUN WAS - familiar. He nevertheless accepted it, although many of his officers did not fall for it and continued to expect a German attack.

Similar successful disinformation campaigns by SD-Ausland with the same goal ran over Latvia, Finland and even Japan.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, STAUN had remained determined to attack Germany at the moment when Russia had achieved the numerical superiority he wanted.

The crucial point behind all the treacherous maneuvers, MÜLLER said, was to lull STAUN INTO safety as long as possible in order to attack before he could attack Germany in turn.

In addition to this, HITLER had received enough further information from diplomatic circles and from the side of air reconnaissance, which convinced him that he had to bring STAUN down as soon as possible. Later, after overrunning the Soviet headquarters, the German troops would indeed have the relevant evidence of the planned Russian attack. This would also have been confirmed by the interrogations of captured Soviet military officers.

MÜLLER, however, gave the CIC the hint that probably not all of his findings would have reached HITLER.

This had come out because General MÜLLER had kept all his records. After July 20, 1944, when his relationship with HITLER was on a secure footing, he told the Führer about it.<sup>2</sup>

HITLER then became angry and said that MÜLLER should have come to him directly with his information earlier. However, the general replied that the protocol of the time forbade direct contact. He also had no friends in HITLER'S environment. HITLER accepted this, but continued to be annoyed.

From this it can be concluded that HITLER RECEIVED only a part of MÜLLER'S reports unfiltered in 1940/41. In fact, MÜLLER'S secret reports went through the Foreign Office, but only a fraction of the incoming intelligence was passed on from there to the leadership.<sup>1</sup> It is not known whether those responsible for this omission were ever investigated.

In 1944, the Russian agents of the SO tried again to send >war-departing< messages to Germany, but this failed. This will be discussed in a later publication.

Until today it remains unknown who the German spies in STALIN'S - leadership level were. They were never caught, nor were the Russian >moles< in the German Führer's headquarters. However, they seem to have been on the economic and political rather than on the military level.

As it seems, Germany's counterpart to the mysterious Soviet agent >WERTHER< at the Fuehrer's headquarters could not provide any information about the direct military actions of the Red Army.

## **2. Chapter**

**The >Unaware<.**

**Did the acts of treason really not trigger any  
reactions from the Allies?**



## Did the Western Allies react to the betrayal of the German attack term ins?

The information from German sources of treason and from the ULTRA radio reconnaissance, all of which pointed to a further extension of the war to the east, was not to remain without consequences.

After the U.S. got hold of HITLER's Directive No. **21** in early **1941**, this became the corrective element of American policy toward the USSR. The betrayal of the secret plan >Barbarossa< probably triggered a correction of the whole American policy in **1941** and also played a role when the "Lend-Lease-Act" was adopted made possible a generous supply of war material by the USA to Germany's enemies.

The Führer's directive No. 21 of 18. 12. 1940: the "Barbarossa case". Its betrayal led to a comprehensive correction of international relations

As late as the end of **1940**, the volume of armaments intended for the British at that time was still at full price, initially for profit, for eight months, which was considered necessary for the expansion of the defense of the >Western Hemisphere< in the USA. With the "Lend-Lease-Act" everything changed. Now, in the event of war, the Soviet Union could also be supplied with armaments of American manufacture.

Staffs of the armed forces of the United States and Great Britain probably established working relations as a result of the threat of German attack on Russia, although the United States was officially in a state of neutrality at the time.

As a further preparation for war, **ROOSEVELT declared** a "state of unlimited emergency" in the USA in May **1941**. To extend the war, plans were ready in the spring of **1941** for the occupation of Greenland, Iceland, the Azores and Martinique by American troops. <sup>1</sup>

To this day, it is disputed when U.S. President ROOSEVELT and British Prime Minister CHURCHILL began to discuss the impending Eastern campaign via the transatlantic undersea telephone line. Since the Germans had tapped the transatlantic submarine cable and could read along, this would have provided further clues that the German attack on Russia had long since ceased to be a secret.

The British also reacted to the future German invasion of Russia. Naturally, they were relieved that Germany's invasion plan against Britain would thus have to be postponed again. British military officials gave the Red Army eight to twelve weeks to resist - so something had to be done as soon as possible. General WAVELL got the order to occupy Iraq with its oil fields for England. German attempt to support an Iraqi uprising against England failed as early as May 1941. The unique opportunity to gain Iraq as a

jumping-off Orient intervening in time recognized too late by Germany.

The knowledge of the coming German attack on the Soviet Union had generated yet another reaction from the British. It is still considered so secret today that it never appeared in Western Allied or Russian files. Statements by English sailors involved however, show that on June 12, 1944, the first Arctic convoy of ships carrying English arms arrived in the Russian port of Murmansk.<sup>1</sup> Russia was still at peace at that time, and England, hard pressed by the Wehrmacht, would have needed every rifle and every plane loaded on the ships of the Russia convoy itself if one had not been afraid on the English side that the Soviet Union would otherwise be able to resist the coming German attack for only eight weeks.

To this day, the >Dervish< convoy is still mistakenly considered the first Allied Arctic convoy. Dervish< started on August 21, 1944 and arrived in Murmansk on August 31. Accordingly, the real first convoy should have left its starting port already at the end of May, beginning of June 1941. The preparation and loading work probably lasted through April/May. At this time, however, there was still >deep peace< between Germany and Russia.

The later famous >Anti-Hitler-Coalition< between the Western powers and Russia was thus formed even before >Barbarossa< - because it had been learned that the Wehrmacht would turn to the East.

The American ambassador in Moscow, STEINHARDT, reacted in a special way to the betrayed plan of attack against Russia. The wife of Ambassador STEINHARDT, dated May 5, 1944, instructed that all silver, table and bed linen be prepared for shipment to America. The next day, referring to her husband, she declared, "The Germans will make a terrible blitz." On June 1, the Herr Ambassador himself began to pack his bags for a speedy evacuation. On June 20, he personally reconnoitered the route by which, in the worst case, it would be possible to get away from the residence in Moscow to a dacha rented in the village of Tarasovka. STEINHARDT's car, however, was stopped by local residents who thought the U.S. ambassador was a spy. Russian intelligence officers had to rush to the diplomat's aid.

So nobody will be able to say that the information of the Western Allies forthcoming enterprise >Barbarossa< remained without consequences there.

While the Anglo-Americans made the best of the situation, the Russians made almost fatal mistakes.

## Why Hitler was faster. Or: How did Stalin react German reports of treason?

Until today the politically correct historiography still tries to claim that the peace-loving Russia was completely surprised by the German attack on June 22, 1941. <sup>1</sup> The peaceful attacked then had to defend themselves of course and to free the world from the >criminal< until May 8, 1945. <sup>2</sup>

Others say that STAUN, full of stubbornness, regarded all warnings of a possible German attack as provocation and called the sources of these reports sons of bitches or English provocateurs. Both are demonstrably not true!

Indeed, the numerous reports of betrayal of German intentions to the Soviets were not without consequences. The problem, however, was that STAUN became confused by the large number of incoming reports and increasingly doubted their veracity, since the reported deadlines kept passing without the predicted attack taking place. But this was due to the fact that the German attack dates had to be pushed back again and again

meantime, the Germans soon learned that the Soviets expected a German attack. Thus, the former Chief of General Staff HALDER wrote in his diary on September 27, 1940: "The news that Russia expects an armed conflict with us in 1941 is increasing." <sup>3</sup>

Since the fall of the old Soviet Union and the only partial opening of the Russian archives, it is now clear what claimed behind closed doors for decades. It is more or less proven that STAUN was indeed preparing an attack on Germany. In 1990, a document published in a journal of the Russian General Staff was also found. It was a deployment plan for the Red Army prepared by General Alexander VASILEVSKY AND dated May 15, 1941, signed by Soviet War Minister TYMOSHENKO and Chief of General Staff ZHUKOV. There was a single copy of it, intended for STAUN. German MGFA historians such as UEBERSCHÄR now claim that this document is greatly overestimated, since STAUN strictly forbade the implementation of this plan, as he would have wanted to avoid any provocation towards Berlin.

According to the research of the Russian military historian Dimitri BoLKO- GONOV, STAUN at least took note of the plan and signed it. A written note of ZHUKOV from 1997, which was found in the Russian Presidential Palace, also confirms that STAUN had >completely< approved the most important theses of the >movement< of the General Staff of May 1941. In fact, it was a race, because ZHUKOV had continuous knowledge about the German deployment, expected an attack, but

believed,

The operational plan presented by ZHUKOV and TIMOSHENKO in May 1941. From: Walter POST, *Unternehmen Barbarossa*, Mittler, Hamburg-Berlin-Bonn 21996. Somewhat optimistically, the Soviet General Staff had assumed that it would be able to cross Poland and reach Breslau within 30 days

s Tepikhov

Reserves of the  
Ob.Xamm<Andos

to get ahead of him.<sup>1</sup> In his plan of May 15, 1941, he nevertheless warned that there was a possibility that "it (Germany - author's note) might outflank us in the deployment and launch a surprise strike"! In view of this, ZHUKOV ASSUMED THAT he could accelerate Soviet plans. In a concluding chapter, he then let STAUN know that orders for the "transition to attack" had already been given.<sup>2-3</sup>

As early as the end of April, Moscow had instructed its foreign mission to explore the attitudes of all other states in the event of a Germany-Russia clash.<sup>4</sup> Nothing was left to chance.

Contrary to the accusation, which is still asserted today, that STAUN sank into almost suicidal passivity in the spring of 1941 by refusing to react to the reports of the concentration of German troops on the borders, the Russian dictator was well aware of the great danger.

However, he had long been under the misconception that HITLER would not be able to strike before the summer of 1942. He was convinced that he would still have enough time to initiate the final preparations for the Russian attack on Germany.

It was not until Japanese Foreign Minister Josunke MATSUOKA visited Moscow and signed a neutrality pact with Russia in April 1941 that STAUN SET in motion the final preparations for a preemptive strike against Germany. This took place between April 15 and May 5, 1941, and then, beginning in April 1941, the massive concentration of the 247 divisions earmarked for use against Germany in the future theater of war began with the greatest haste. These accounted for 81.5 percent of the Red Army's personnel.

Because of the England flight of Hitler's deputy Rudolf HESS, the Soviets then feared that there might be a separate peace between Britain and Germany. The Russians feared if they unleashed a war against Germany and marched their forces into Europe, Britain expected to conclude an alliance with Germany without hesitation. Only when the Soviet Union learned of the failure of the Hess mission and became convinced that the war between Great Britain and Germany would continue, did it decide to fully execute its plans.

This was probably accelerated by the now increasingly numerous warnings of German attack plans. In May, the British had code designation >Barbarossa< from the Luftwaffe through >Ultra<. Whether this - immediately passed on to STAUN is an open question.

Then, on May 24, 1941, STAUN held a top-secret meeting of the military and political leadership in the Kremlin, where, in all likelihood, the new date of completion of the war preparations was also decided.

Russian historians believe that the war readiness of troops in the western districts near the border was to be completed on June 1, 1941. By that date, it was planned to complete the deployment of all units stationed in these districts. At the same time, the concentration and deployment of the Red Army's 2nd Strategic Squadron were also completed.

By July 15, 1941, the entire deployment was to have been completed. According to military experts, completion of the concentration and the completion of the deployment on Soviet border would have been the signal for an immediate attack on Germany.

As has been pointed out here, each of the two sides knew about the other's preparations. But each also assumed that the initiative in opening hostilities would lie with itself. One difference between the parallel marches of Russians and Germans was that the planned attack dates of the Russians did not fall into the hands of the German agents in the Kremlin. Thus, the Wehrmacht lulled itself into a false sense of security - and this time it was lucky.

However, the rapid progress of the German buildup and the massive accumulation of accurate treason reports about German attack intentions in the second half of June 1941 then confronted the Soviet leadership with the problem of either changing its entire planning for the war to a strategic defensive or bringing forward its own attack date as far

A strategic defensive would have required a complete change of deployment, which, given Russia's poor railroad network, would have led to absolute chaos in the short time until >Barbarossa< broke out.

Soviet leadership apparently decided of necessity to bring forward its own attack date. At the same time, the German side was stalled as long as possible by offers of negotiations and increased deliveries of raw materials.

The increasing hectic pace explains not only the ever more rapid deployment of troops, but also the standstill orders for the units stationed directly behind the front. The Soviet leadership tried everything to further camouflage its own deployment as best it could and thus gain time to complete concentration of its shock armies with mechanized corps behind the veil of cover troops close to the border<sup>1-2</sup>

The Red Army and the German Wehrmacht demonstrably marched up in parallel to the attack. Whoever struck first would throw the enemy's deployment and war plan into chaos and seize the strategic initiative, which had to have decisive advantages for the further course of the war.

SCHUKOW and TIMOSCHENKO had therefore recommended in May 1941 in their previously mentioned >considerations< not to wait for the impending German surprise strike, but "to anticipate the enemy in the deployment and to attack the German army when it is in the deployment stage, when it cannot yet build up a front, when it cannot yet organize the battle of the linked arms".

Soviet troops had also already received maps of the enemy's territory. The German border guards opposite also noticed the general staff reconnaissance of the borderland, which usually precedes an attack.<sup>3</sup>

Operation Thunderstorm< was to overrun the German forces in a month. After encircling the German units in the Warsaw-Radom-Lublin area, the Russians wanted to push north to the Baltic Sea in a massive sweep and cut off East Prussia.

STAUEN, however, made the almost fatal mistake of allowing himself to be surprised by the speed of the German advance.

The Russian doctrine of early mobilization and deployment was also applied to the potential wartime adversary, Germany, and German troop movements and massings were misjudged from this point of view.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, the decisive armored troops and the German attacking units were not yet in the border area until ^^near the time of the attack is true that the Russians were correctly informed by their traitors and spies exact whereabouts of the large German units. And yet, in spite of all warnings, the Germans succeeded in pulling off a surprise: namely, the German assault troops were not brought into the border area until the last minute, after a precisely calculated meticulous time-

assumed similar  
at scenarios as  
at that time,  
war's generals  
ed the German  
th the speed  
ployment



Deployment situation on the side of the Red Army (graphic by Heinz MAGENHEIMER). Based on his knowledge of the German attack plans, STAUN tried to accelerate his deployment and bring forward his own attack date. In the end, only about two weeks separated (Operation Barbarossa < (Germany) and (Unternehmen Gewitter) (Soviet Union

Rail loading of Char B  
flame tanks, June 1941.  
The precision and speed of  
the transfer of German  
armored units by rail  
immediately before the  
start of Operation >Bar-  
barossa< was totally  
unexpected by the  
Russians. Soon the quality  
of the German rail supply  
was to deteriorate >in a  
flash<. (Source: Author)

plan transported by rail to their staging areas. From there, they attacked directly from the movement without delay. This offensive tactic was beyond the imagination of the Russian planners<sup>1,2</sup>

At the same time, the German traitors were surprised. The. Tactics to let actual attacking units move from the depth of the European area into the intended attacking position on time at the beginning of the campaign also surprised most of the German officers and generals. Thus, the Soviets also did not learn anything until it was too late.

As German attack preparations became more and more apparent in June 1941, ZHUKOV realized that HITLER was about to win the race for the first strike. In his opinion, at least the military districts now had to put on immediate alert. STAUN, however, felt that this was too risky, that HITLER would be alerted prematurely and could order an immediate attack. The Soviet dictator was in a dilemma!

STAUN had Moscow's air defenses put on alert on June 19 and, as a second measure, tried to establish contact with Berlin. Anxious to buy time, STAUN even wanted to send his foreign minister to Berlin. When the German Foreign Office replied that Ribbentrop was out of town, the Russians were alarmed, and STAUN called an urgent meeting. The meeting lasted 70 minutes. Its contents are not available to this day. In all likelihood, however, STAUN ordered the first strike to be carried out now, as quickly as possible, whether in a few days or

also in a week at the most. All western military districts were to form into fronts immediately. The three strategic areas would be assigned commanders and supervisors from Moscow, and General ZHUKOV was sent to Ukraine to supervise the important southwestern front. In the meantime, however, the participants in the meeting learned that the war would probably begin with a German attack as early as the morning of June 22, 1941. Now the Russian troop commanders were to be informed that a German attack might begin on 22 or 23 June after an alleged >provocation<. The Army should therefore be careful not to provide such a provocation as a pretext. Troops should therefore move forward closer to the border but otherwise remain quiet<sup>1-2</sup>

The only problem was that the Soviet Union at that time still relied on telegraphic or telephone transmission for lack of radio equipment. Few of these cables ran underground, and none of the vital wires were guarded. This was to prove a fatal error. On the night of June 21, almost all telegraph and telephone lines were cut by German commandos who had crossed the border a few days earlier.<sup>3</sup>

Thus it happened that STALIN'S "Directive No. 1" did not reach the Soviet border troops in time, with the exception of some areas on the southern front and in the Crimea. Even today, it is considered suicidal neglect. Russians neither the army, the police nor the intelligence service, nor the local commanders on the ground bothered to have the telegraph lines guarded that night.

The reactions of the Red Army to the German preemptive strike the next day speak volumes.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the 6th Rifle Corps of the 6th Russian Army immediately crossed the state border in the Rawa-Russkaya area and the commander of the North-West Front, General Colonel KUZNETSOV, ordered his troops to advance toward Tilsit in East Prussia. In the Black Sea area and in Estonia, Soviet naval forces moved to land operations. By June 30, 1941, General ZHUKOV insisted on attack,<sup>5</sup> nor did he demand anything but attack from his commanders on the fronts. On the southern front, for example, this resulted in the loss of one fifth of all the tanks the Red Army had at all, in suicidal attacks. The 5th, 6th, and 26th Armies were there-

22 Junin 1941: -  
destroyed Soviet air  
base. Not only the  
surprise effect of the  
German  
offensive paralyzed the  
Soviet formations, but  
also and especially  
STAVIN'S Directive No. 1,  
which did  
not reach numerous  
formations in time and in  
any case prevented any  
countermeasures.

at wiped out. The attack from 27. 6. to 2. 7. 1941 is considered in Russia as one of the worst mistakes of the 1941 campaign ever. 160,000 Red Army soldiers fell. <sup>1</sup>

It was not until July that ZHUKOV and his staff came to the conclusion that attack had probably not been quite the right thing to do.

When the German operation >Barbarossa< started on June 22, 1941, HITLER was obviously not aware of how lucky he had been. If >Barbarossa< had been postponed again as in May, for example to July 22, the Germans would probably have been hit by the Soviet Operation >Thunderstorm<, which would probably have started between July 6 and 15, 1941.

The Russian Army General IVANOV then also gave a very direct reference to this date. According to him, the Wehrmacht had succeeded in "literally beating us to the punch by two weeks."<sup>3</sup>

But the fact is that neither STAUN and ZHUKOV nor was the Red Army clueless.

Germany, in fact, owes part of the initial success of 22 June to its special commandos, able to prevent the Red Army, especially the Luftwaffe, alerted by telephone cable sabotage.

The betrayal of the attack date in the end increased the damage to the Soviet Union by wrong reaction of the Russian leadership.

### **Did Hitler know before the start of the Eastern campaign that "Operation Barbarossa" had been betrayed to the Russians?**

By 24 April 1941 at the latest, the German High Command knew that its carefully guarded plan of attack against Russia was known to STAUN.<sup>4</sup> On that day, the German naval attaché, Kapitän zur See BAUMBACH, sent a telegram to the High Command of the Kriegsmarine. This telegram, from the German Embassy and numbered 34112/110, stated, "For Kriegsmarine."

1. Rumors circulating here want to know about alleged danger of war Germany-Soviet Union, to which messages of transients from Germany contribute.

2. According to the Italian embassies, the British ambassador predicted June 22 as the day the war would begin.

3. Otherwise, May 20 is called.

Am trying hard to counter rumors that are obviously nonsensical"

Thus, it can be proved that the German high command had known since April that STAUN knew about the German plans. It is interesting that here obviously the betrayal of HERWARTH VON BITTENFELDS and VON HALEMS (>transients< from Germany) was referred to.

### **3. Chapter**

#### **How Germany Prepared for the Eastern Campaign**

**Probably no campaign has ever been started with  
such carelessness**



### **3A) The underestimation of the Russian opponent**

**Many mistakes made by the Germans in the preparation and execution of >Barbarossa< were based on an incredible underestimation of Russian strength Until today come to light how this happened**

#### **Did Chief of Staff Haider really not know better?**

On January 17, 1941, at a meeting in the Reich Chancellery with HITLER and VON BRAUCHITSCH, Chief of General Staff Pranz HALDER expressed great optimism about the fighting strength of the Red Army. It would have obsolete equipment and, above all, few planes and old tanks. <sup>1</sup>

#### **Better Than Thought: The Real Capabilities of German Enemy Reconnaissance on the Eastern Front**

Wehrmacht's reconnaissance had a variety of capabilities These included reconnaissance squads, aerial reconnaissance, radio artillery sonic reconnaissance, Kradschützen rec, armored reconnaissance forces, and agents

The General Staff Department of the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht (>Foreign Armies East<), the Chief of Naval Intelligence of the Naval War Directorate as well as the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force (OBdL) had corresponding specialized units for evaluation .

As has become apparent only in recent years, the German reconnaissance services on the Eastern Front, despite strict secrecy on Soviets learned much more than was generally assumed until today

German intelligence on Russia before the start of the war was then also precise, extensive and timely. However, in contrast to what the Allies drew from their prior knowledge through Ultra and espionage, German intelligence had much less influence on the course of

To this day, no one has been able or willing to reveal exactly the background to this failure. was conspicuous was a fragmentation of capabilities of the various German services According to experts, this may have been deliberate, and experts speak tellingly of "management decisions in the field of radio reconnaissance that are still incomprehensible today". Another word is >Ver- rat< or/and >Sabotage<. <sup>1</sup>



## **Wasted victory in the electronic war? - The Tragedy of German Radio Reconnaissance**

Since the 1970s, it has been known that radio reconnaissance played a decisive role in the Second World War. Thus, it can be considered certain that the findings of the Allied ultra/enigma decryption contributed significantly to the German defeat.

Meantime, the general impression has developed that the German side had nothing equivalent to counter the Allies. In fact, however, German radio reconnaissance managed to break into the Allied communications system just as much as vice versa. Unlike the Allies, however, the Germans were able to derive less benefit from the intelligence gained. Why this was so is one of the greater challenges to modern research. It is seriously interested in historical truth about World War II.

For the Anglo-Americans it is still embarrassing today to admit that from 1940 the German side managed to break into the encrypted transatlantic radiocommunication which the highest government agencies of England and the USA used for their confidential communication, and to listen to its contents simultaneously.

It is less known that German intelligence specialists were also able to break into the highly complex Soviet radio key system and read the message contents transmitted by radio until the surrender and even afterwards (!).

Southwest of Magdeburg was the Hillersleben Army Test Range. It was not only used for testing highly secret new weapons, but it also had special facilities for recording foreign radio traffic. Thus, as early as 1934, Hillersleben was able to listen in on inverted Soviet telephone lines such as Moscow-Paris and decode their contents possibly making them directly audible.

From 1937 onwards, it was possible to record and make readable the Soviet image radio traffic as well.

Research Office of the RLM (Reich Air Ministry) was also very successful. However, it was not one of the tasks of the Research Office to obtain and evaluate military intelligence.

<sup>2</sup> The R5HA (Reich Security Main Office of the 55) had very soon become suspicious: it had begun to monitor Abwehr's operations and read the contents of radio messages.

value. Rather, they were concerned with ^inenpolitical, foreign policy - and economic information.

However, the Research Office had succeeded in penetrating intra-Soviet radio traffic of the production facilities were important for the armaments industry. Thus, the Germans knew exactly about Soviet armaments capacities, their production figures, and difficulties and bottlenecks in supplying the population and industry. Thus, an evaluation unit of the Research Institute had already succeeded in determining the exact status of Soviet armaments before the beginning of the Barbarossa enterprise.

power were evaluated. Again, questions about the motivations of the

Of course, the information had been transmitted in time to the responsible offices at the High Command of the Wehrmacht. However, nowhere is there any evidence that these accurate and correct figures were ever communicated by the High Command of the Wehr-

Abwehr as well as the General Staff Department >Fremde Heere Ost< come into play.

A complete contrast to this were the disastrous Abwehr reports that Admiral CANAMS delivered on Russia to the top leadership. CANAMS was constantly pressed by HITLER to submit new material on the state of Russian operations. For example, the admiral claimed to have impeccable documentation that the industrial center around Moscow connected the rich raw material deposits in the Urals only by a single-track rail line. However, the intelligence service of SS General Walter SCHELLENBERG had quite different information, which showed that the Abwehr also completely manipulated the production figures and the ^number of divisions of the Red Army. All these false claims of the CANARIs people would have come to nothing if the relevant information of other services had been properly appreciated<sup>2</sup>

Full of disappointment, Field Marshal KEITEL later declared before the Allied Tribunal in Nuremberg on April 4, 1946: "The intelligence service of the OKW under Admiral CANARIS provided the Army and me with very little materi

al about the strength of the Red Army.... "In fact, important parts of the captured files of the German Abwehr have not yet been released, although the Second World War will soon be seventy years over.

Therefore, there can and will be surprises in a future evaluation of these files, which have not yet been accessible to the interested public probably allow many a shake-up history appear in a new light even today

GÖRING's research office was also able to read the diplomatic radio traffic of the Soviet embassies.

Despite its successes, the Research Office suffered from strange handicaps. In the summer of 1944, for example, some of the irreplaceable special personnel were ordered to harvest crops while on duty.

contrast to this unjustifiable disdain for the activities of the Research Office on the part of certain German officers was the assessment of the German system by the Western Allies after the end of the war. In Rosenheim and Burscheidungen/Unstrut, they received German key equipment with operators from the Research Office for Soviet Secret Communications operational condition - and put everything back into operation. Hundreds of German decryption specialists were later secretly taken to Great Britain

The German Navy also successfully carried out radio surveillance against the Soviet Union. After this had already begun in the mid-1930s, Soviet naval radio traffic in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea was successfully processed from the beginning of key procedures used by the Kriegsmarine of the German Reich differed only gradually from the procedures of the Soviet Navy, so that on the basis of comparative investigations on the German side all the corresponding Soviet keys could be solved and their contents could be read to a large extent. This was especially true for the 4-Z code (German deck designation Narvik/Namsos). It contained situation reports on Allied and German ship movements, convoys and air reconnaissance messages as well as recognition signals, bearing reports and agent reports. It represented the most important German source of intelligence from the Soviet Northern Fleet report.

According to a postwar account in the so-called >Seabourne Report<, the contribution of radio reconnaissance overall picture of the enemy situation on the German side was as high as eighty percent

movement of Soviet formations, in particular the formation of centers of gravity and imminent attacks, could always be reported in good time. No longer any documents on this subject, but according to the American post-war report, there was no significant Russian attacking enterprise that could

ER'S time,  
ain dealt with  
ssages of the  
n the East - at  
rk, the center  
adio  
ce. Günther  
Geheime  
dienste und  
ung im  
krieg, Ares,  
i. 74.

not only be detected the Luftwaffe reconnaissance service but whose start could also be predicted

From deciphered sayings were further taken starch reports, fuelammunition stocks, condition of airfields, impending airattacks on railroad stations, bridges, etc. There was some sensation of some kind almost daily, and the enumerations would go too far after the >Seabourne report<. Radio reconnaissance at the field offices of the fighter squadrons brought down more than 1000 Russian planes in the central section alone.

Luftwaffe service was described as the "only reliable means" of gathering as much material as possible on the enemy in a promising manner

All German authors of the >Seabourne Report< complained, however, that the (intentionally?) unclear command relationships ofteninhibiting effect on their mission execution The lack of a central radio reconnaissance command on the eastern front had been a major obstacle.

Another strange occurrence was the large number of radio reconnaissance unitshad already been trained and sent to other frontsPartlythey had been so unusual that they could notjustifiedby militaryrequirements Another word for it is again: sabotage!

The fact is that the units fighting directly at the front, such as the fighter squadrons, were able to draw direct benefit from the reports of the army units. The higher command, however, does not seem to have given much credence to the reports - if it received them at all.

Georg PEMLER, WHO HAD been working as an aerial photograph evaluator before the start of the Eastern campaignandhad been assigned to secret reconnaissance squadrons, then also witnessed how the Abwehrs suppressedavailable reports on the true strength of the Russians and how members of the Abwehr critical of CANARis were cold-called in RomaniaOne Dr. BARTH, an Austrian-born senior member of the

Abwehr, said to PEMLER: "I must agree with you on one thing, however, namely the impression that the Wehrmacht leadership considerably underestimates the strength of the Red Army. Personally, I cannot help feeling that this is even encouraged by certain men. For example, we have received from a confidant the repeatedly corroborated news that in a best<sup>^</sup>ten Russian tank plant about 25 heavy tanks are being put out every day. In the meantime, however, three such plants have already been recognized.

One could tear one's hair out if this determination is given a question mark by the Chief of the General Staff, goes back for reconsideration without informing the Führer. "<sup>1</sup>

Dr. BARTO was referring to Chief of Staff General HALDER, WHO WAS - close to the resistance.

It is also interesting to take a look at the alleged technological backwardness of German device development here.

By 1942, German industry was able to supply equipment for radio reconnaissance that was far superior to foreign makes, especially in terms of performance achieved, operational reliability, mechanical design and ease of maintenance although often too much of a good thing was done.

But then oddities began to spread. <sup>2</sup> Excessive secrecy, "incomprehensible responsibilities," and insufficiently coordinated demands by the three branches of the Wehrmacht created chaos, so that many new devices that were already there were "reinvented" several times. Others were to failure by "random inadequate auxiliary communications," especially if they were ideas far ahead of their time

One example: No decision was made for years by those in charge about high altitude receivers that had been fully developed, only to be placed in low priority level 3 in September 1943 (!). <sup>3</sup>

Despite all obstacles, German radio reconnaissance remained one of the leaders until the end of basic ideas of the German direction finding and listening systems could then be recognized in many foreign products after the war

Especially on the Eastern Front, German radio reconnaissance could have been of great importance during World War II. In its importance for the decisions of the leadership and the frontline troops, it would probably have been as crucial as the Ultra der

Allies, that is, if the foreign knowledge used

### **The truth about the Soviet >tank surprise< of summer 1941**

The Wehrmacht entered Russia in June 1941 with about 3350 of its total 5640 tanks. Thus, not even two thirds of the existing tracked vehicles had been sent to the East. Was this a dangerous disregard for the enemy? purely numerical the Germans were outnumbered Soviets by a ratio of 7:1

Although many modern accounts of World War II portray the Soviet tanks of this period as a kind of obsolete garbage, nothing could be further from the truth.<sup>1</sup>

The vast majority of STALIN'S tanks at the beginning of Operation >Barbarossa< were composed of T-26 and BT tanks armed with cannons. These two types had proven their clear superiority over foreign combat vehicles during the Spanish Civil War as well as in the Japanese-Russian border wars in the late 1930s. In addition, there were the medium-weight T-28 and some giant tanks of the T-35 type.

Until the end of the war, Telefunken's >Wullenwever< circular wave DF system was unequaled anywhere in the world. After the end of this system type found a successor in the USA, which was fairly named >Wullenwever< (Source: Fritz TREMKLE, *Die deutschen Funkpeil- und Horchverfahren bis 7 945*, AEG-Telefunken, Ulm 1982).

Their German opponents in the summer of 1941 consisted of a wildmixture of old, new and looted vehicles A large proportion was still the Panzer I and II, of which the Panzer I had already been hopelessly outgunned by the Russian T-26 and BT in the Spanish Civil War. The Panzer II had had great problems with anti-tank fire in Poland and France in 1939/ 40. Only the Panzer III and IV as well as the Czech Type 38 Looptanzer were considered modern fighting vehicles.

The largest and heaviest vehicles in HITLER'S arsenal were the modern French Char B2 (F) booty tank and two or three examples of the so-called >Neubaufahrzeug< (NbFz), whichin its origins went back well into the Weimar period.

Wehrmacht planners, however, seem to have so convinced superiority of their blitzkrieg strategy that they >easily< left a considerable portion of the German tank reserves on other fronts or in the homeland

Only three days after the beginning of the campaign, the Germans realized that they deal with many more enemy armored vehicles than they expected worse was that new and superior Soviet armored vehicles appeared, which, according to their information, should not have ex These were the KV-I, KV-II and T-34 tanks.

The KV-I was probably the most powerful tank on Soviet soil in its time Its strong armor and excellent kano-

A captured Soviet KV-II tank is closely inspected by soldiers of the German Wehrmacht  
Because the KV-II was cumbersome and slow, it was soon withdrawn from service

ne made it a tough opponent for the German tanks of 1941. Thus, at the beginning of >Unternehmen Barbarossa<, individual KV-Is were able to stop entire companies of German tanks several times - just as the German >Tiger tanks< were able to defy the Western Allied tanks of the >Cromwell< and >Sherman< types in Normandy in 1944.

The robust T-34 tank (23.6 t), which can no longer be fought by the conventional Pak.

An even worse surprise for the German frontline troops was the Russian T-34. Probably no other tank influenced development of combat vehicles as much as the T-34. It represented a successful mixture of mobility, firepower, good armor protection and successful styling. Beveled armor of the T-34 was 45 mm compared to 20 to 30 mm of the German vehicles. Also bad for German tank crews was the discovery that the new generation of Soviet tanks were equipped with a fearsome 76 mm USV-39 gun. It could crack the German Panzer III and IV tanks even from a distance of 1000 meters.

The appearance of the T-34 thus turned everything that had been proudly in the German arsenal until then into old iron with a stroke of the pen.

Wehrmacht's anti-tank defense also faced a shambles. The usual German 3.7 cm standard Pak could not endanger the new Russian tanks even at close range, and



red the  
of the T-34  
me for the  
he Eastern  
istol long-  
aissance  
e Romanian  
the type  
MK. 1;  
ll in the -  
privacy

got the >flattering< nickname >Reichsanklopfgerät<. Even the new German 5 cm Pak gun, which was only being introduced, was hardly a match for the T-34. Only the German 8.8 cm anti-aircraft gun could shoot down the Russian super tanks at long range. The ability of the 8.8 cm anti-aircraft gun to repel even the heaviest Soviet tanks probably saved the German Ostheer from disaster 1941

This was not a surprise, however, because already during the French campaign in the summer of 1940 the 8.8 cm flak was the only weapon with which heavy British and French tanks could be stopped. Must therefore be asked why the German armament planners did not draw the appropriate conclusions as early as the summer of 1940 and cut back production of the inferior 3.7 cm Pak long ago in favor of large-caliber weapons. Thus, the new 7.5 cm Pak was ready as early as 1939. The Army Ordnance Office, however, did not order it until 1942 at Hm.ER's insistence!

The appearance of superior Russian heavy tanks in the summer of 1941 therefore forced the Wehrmacht, with haste and great effort, to completely convert its tank weaponry, which had hitherto been quite successful against its Western opponents

For a while they considered simply rebuilding the T-34, then they developed completely new, superior, but also expensive and complicated tanks, like the >Tiger< and the >Panther<.

The already existing tanks III and IV had to be extensively improved with new guns and additional armor to be able to stand up to the Russian threat to some extent. However, all this only had an effect in the course of 1942, since with the exception of Panzer III (L/60) no preliminary planning had been done

In fact, the appearance of the new Soviet heavy tanks was an >unnecessary surprise< for the Germans. At least two senior German officers had premonitions that something was wrong.<sup>1,2</sup>

Panzer General GIDERIAN as well as SD Foreign Intelligence Chief SCHellenberg reported on the behavior of a Soviet delegation of experts in the spring of 1941. For this visit, HITLER had had the secrecy regulations lifted in order to be able to show the Soviets the latest German tank factories. It seems that HITLER's intentions to attack had not yet been finally determined at that time.

The Russian delegation members, however, had expressed indignation that they had not been shown the latest German model in the form of the Panzer IV, and would not accept that the Germans really had nothing else. This was a clear sign to all concerned that the Soviets themselves already

had much better and more modern products than the Wehrmacht:

From 1940 on, the Germans had a very intensive exchange of secret information with the Romanian side framework of their protective function for Romania as well as in preparation of the >Unternehmen Barbarossa< It took place mainly through the German >Air Force Mission of Romania, which closely cooperated with the defense of Admiral CANARIS.

Georg PEMLER, a long-range reconnaissance officer, then witnessed Romanian officers giving the Germans the exact details of their intelligence on Russian armaments in April 1941.<sup>1</sup>

This information also contained precise details about the new Soviet KW-I and KW-II tanks, right down to their armor and armament

were also initial indications from the Romanians of the planned introduction of a new tank with great speed and firepower and a chassis similar to the >Christie development< The tank, however, had not yet been observed the Soviet-occupied Romanian territories and was only in the process of E^^ing

Georg PEMLER, however, managed to uncover a sensation during the aerial evaluation of secret photos of the Prut and Dniester sections. He found trains with strange covered vehicles, where in all cases the shadow from the showed a clear elevation. more exact enlargement as well as under the space glass it showed up that under this covering from a gun barrel stuck out Based on existing documentation, data new T-34 was already available on sketches and drawings Interestingly enough, according to PEMLER, some of these sketches showed

descriptions were in English. It was clear that the turret of the new tank was shifted forward - a significant difference from the previous tanks.

These were clearly tanks of this new type - proof that production of the T-34 was already so far advanced that it was already being delivered to the troops. <sup>1</sup> German specialists immediately had the documents transported by special courier plane from Bucharest via Vienna to Berlin, and PEMLER was allowed to fly in the courier plane.

The documents arrived demonstrably, but were not passed on to the top leadership. Everything was in vain! This cost time and blood. Fortunately for the German Wehrmacht, the Russian >Tankist< of 1941 was poorly led, and its armored units were misplaced.

The new Russian tanks were also not yet mechanically mature. Probably more T-34s were lost in 1941 because of mechanical problems than because of enemy action

Before its introduction, the Russians had tested their T-34 prototypes against German tanks such as the Panzer III As part of the German-Soviet pact, Germany also had to supply the Soviet^tion with test examples of this vehicle. So it is no wonder that the T-34 was then completely superior to the early German tank types.

Fortunately for the Wehrmacht, the first T-34s were not deployed in large groups in July 1941, but as individual vehicles. On October 6, 1941, the first mass deployment of the T-34 occurred at Mtsensk, where the German 2nd Panzer Army suffered significant losses of combat vehicles<sup>2</sup>

By the end of 1941, Germany had but wiped out the Russian tank superiority. All of a decade's Soviet tank armor efforts were lost in a series of devastating defeats. Despite the undeniable valor of Soviet tank forces, German material losses could only be classified as moderate. On the Eastern Front, for example, only 130 German tanks were lost in June 1941, 744 in July, and 604 in August. Total German tank losses, including those in Africa during 1941, amounted to 2900 vehicles

It was completely different with the Soviets! Russia went to war with 29000 tanks. Between July and December 1941, Russian industry managed to produce 4800 more armored vehicles. Nevertheless, by December 1941, the Soviet Red Army was able to lead only 4495 tanks into battle, 2124 of which were stationed in the Far East beyond German reach. These were astronomical losses despite inferior German tank technology

Nevertheless, all alarm bells were ringing among the German planners. It therefore remains to be clarified to what extent the failure to pass on existing information about STALIN's new tanks harmed the Germans.

tion  
of course  
n to the  
t that

On May 26, 1941, about a month before the start of Operation Barbarossa, a tank planning conference was held at the Berghof near Berchtesgaden. It called for the development of a new heavy tank. Produced in small numbers, it was to serve as the >tip< in the Wehrmacht's fast formations and ensure the future superiority of the German tank weapon over British models. Not a word was said about the new Russian heavy tanks- because no one knew about the imminent danger!<sup>1</sup>

When the truth became known after the outbreak of the fighting, the High Command of the Wehrmacht nevertheless continued at first to underestimate the enemy types, as is reported elsewhere.

Despite >confusion< in the Heereswaffenamt all new developments of vehicles of the German 30-ton tank class (VK3001) were stopped. This also affected the VK2001 and VK24001 developments. Now completely new paths were to be taken leading to the armored vehicles >Panther<, >Tiger< and the assault gun >Ferdinand<.

The damage done by the failure to pass on existing information was, on the one hand, certainly psychological in the sense of an inferiority complex. German soldiers vis-à-vis new Russian monsters and, above all, a loss of time of at least three months in the development of new types. Otherwise, this would have meant that the new Panzer III version J - with long 5 cm Kan- ne L/60 would have been sufficiently available in time for the battle for Moscow and that the German tanks >Tiger< and >Panther<, which were superior to the T-34, would have been available in sufficient quantities in time for the planned relief of Stalingrad in December 1942.

### **Panzer 111 better than T-34? The incredible underestimation of the Russian tank by the High Command of the Wehrmacht.**

The combat debut of the Russian T-34 tank in the summer of 1941 proved that it was undoubtedly the best tank design of the time. The revolutionary combination of thick sloped armor, heavy firepower, and superior mobility placed it in a class far above its nearest German competitors, Panzerkampfwagen III and Panzerkampfwagen IV.<sup>1</sup>

Although Germany's reconnaissance was able to obtain timely information on the existence of this superior fighting vehicle, the Army High Command was not concerned with it as late as May 26, 1941. Instead, at this meeting at HULER'S Berghof, it was stated that "we have a clear superiority over the British tank weapon this year. This superiority must never be lost." The Russian tank weapon was not even mentioned!

When the T-34 entered front-line action in July 1941, the Wehrmacht

High Command considered it a far inferior vehicle to the German types. This disdain, which seems inexplicable today, was generated by trickery. For example, when a comparison drive between Soviet booty tanks and German combat vehicles was staged at the Berka military training area near Eisenach, the T-34 fell far behind in test drives.

The designer Ferdinand PORSCHE was present, and soon the whole thing seemed very strange to him as a technician. He got to the bottom of the matter and discovered that the engine of the Russian combat vehicle had been deliberately sabotaged. PORSCHE demanded a locksmith's suit, got under the Russian tank and tinkered with the engine. Then it was started up, and the engine now gave much better performance.

Asked for his opinion, PORSCHE stated bluntly that the T-34 was currently the best tank in the world; only thing to do, he said, was to confidently rebuild and make improvements of one's own<sup>2</sup>

But people did not like to hear such things. The T-34 was never reproduced, and PORSCHE HEARD THE strangest arguments: Army Weapons Office excuses a lack of materials and other things. On May 16, 1942, the reproduction plan was officially dropped.

The T-34 thus remained a coveted booty item for reuse at the front by the Wehrmacht. In March 1943, however, after the recapture of Kharkov, the SS had shown how it could have been done: Panzerwerk No. 183, located on the eastern edge of the city, was put back into operation. It not only dealt with the serial repair of damaged tanks, but also successfully undertook the reassembly of T-34/76s in considerable numbers<sup>1</sup>

The cheating in the presentation of tanks continued later. For example, new German tank models were fitted with extra >upgraded< engines before being presented to decision-makers. These then feigned much better performance in the field than the vehicles equipped with production engines could later show at the front. Again, there were never any sanctions against those responsible for this cheating.

### **Surprising what the German Air Force was told by its intelligence service.**

One of the reasons for the German defeat in the East was that the German air force leadership had no idea of expected scale of tactical and operational deployment in the event of war with the USSR.

The German Air Force confidently expected to be able to quickly overwhelm STALIN's >Red Fal-ken<.

true that the >Legion Condor< had already had bad experiences with advanced Russian aircraft types, such as the 1-16 >Rata< and the SB-2 fast bomber during the Spanish Civil War in 1936. After that, however, there seemed to have been no significant innovation in the Russian air arsenal. This was confirmed in the Finnish winter war of 1940. There, the Soviet Air Force competed with more or less the same types of aircraft it had had early in the Spanish Civil War.

The Germans knew, however, that Russia had an incredible number of warplanes at the ready. But they also knew that pilot training left much to be desired and that radar and radio equipment still in its infancy.

Although there had been a large number of international records for Soviet aviators prewar years, this was not noted until the spring of 1941, when Russian long-range reconnaissance flew in high altitudes over Romania, Hungary, and later the Generalgouvernement (formerly Poland), completely safe from fighters and anti-aircraft fire.

Until the very end, the German Air Force Information Service as well as

strength of the Russian  
air force was completely  
underestimated

It was thought to be  
severely outgunned and  
to have consisted mainly  
of obsolete models such  
as the Polikarpov-1-15  
biplane destroyed here.

the defenses of Admiral Canaw's continued to provide a deceptive assurance to the Wehrmacht that the Russian Air Force was an obsolete colossus.

This resulted in serious tactical surprises when the new Russian aircraft types appeared. One such unwelcome event is cited in the report of a Wehrmacht flak unit in Army Group North: "On August 14 and 15 three Russian ground fighters were shot down. This new type has two 2 cm guns, two machine guns and numerous bombs. This type of fighter has armor on all vital parts, so that light flak has no effect on it." However, everything published by German air intelligence late as October 1941 about the type IL-2 referred to here was a completely inaccurate silhouette<sup>1</sup>

Even when the Unternehmen Barbarossa continued, the Germans saw no need to correct this misjudgment. The fact that in the meantime the most modern types of aircraft had long since been captured, which had to fear no comparison with corresponding foreign developments, was apparently of no concern to anyone.

Such misinformation and underestimation of the Soviet Air Force not only caused front-line units to suffer unnecessary losses, but also contributed to misguided decisions by the German leadership in the preparation and early stages of Operation Barbarossa.

## **The consequences of the German underestimation of the Russian war preparations of summer 1941**

In fact, in June 1941, the largest concentration of troops in the history of the world was formed on the future Eastern Front, but not on the German, but on the Russian side of the border. STAUN had deployed 23200 tanks, 79100 guns and grenade launchers for a total of 303 divisions. They were to be supported by over 20,000 warplanes. Among them there were already more than 2650 planes of the newest type (fighter planes Jak 1, Lagg 3, dive bombers Pe-2 and battle planes IL-2). They were deployed in two squadrons

Germany had only 3285 tanks and 32,710 guns as well as 3410 aircraft to oppose them: an incredible risk for the German side, which knew neither the number nor the quality of the enemy it was facing

While Germany's secret intelligence services reported to their leadership a dramatic increase in major Soviet formations on Germany's eastern border, they assumed only 220 Russian divisions, although the first and second waves already included 303 divisions

In addition to misreporting the quantity and quality of the enemy's forces, German intelligence also failed to report that STALIN's army had been reorganized into large armored formations, the mechanized corps. Instead, the Wehrmacht still counted on tanks as infantry support weapons on the Russian side, similar to the situation in France in 1940. By February and March 1941, 26 of these large armored formations were already present in the Soviet Union - classic offensive weapons for modern mobile combat

risky for the Wehrmacht because the German high command also wanted to apply the blitzkrieg concept to the Russian campaign. It was based on using massive armored forces to break through an immobile opponent with the help of air superiority to direct attack troops into his rear

From HITLER'S statements of August 1941 it can be seen that the German war plan might have turned out quite differently if he had known about the real Russian strength beforehand. Thus, there was a high probability that already on the basis of this false information supplied to the German leadership, *the German war plan would have been* Friedrich Georg - Verrat an der Ostfront - Der verlorene Sieg

The German blitzkrieg attack plan against Russia failed because it was tailored to a different opponent. Actually, as it was probably the goal of the treacherous forces, come to a disaster for the Wehrmacht from the very



beginning based on an actual balance of power

And yet things turned out quite differently at first, as HITLER HAD his actual operational plan >Unternehmen Barbarossa<, which had been kept secret until the end and secured against betrayal, applied, and STALIN's war plan (Operation >Gewitter<) fatally favored the German effort.

### **38) >Like a wind in the Russian steppes<**

#### **Was the inadequate equipment of the German Eastern Army a coincidence?**

#### **Was the equipment of the Eastern Army sabotaged?**

"With all due respect to the German Wehrmacht, one nevertheless cannot avoid the conclusion that, blinded by the blitzkrieg idea, it was disastrously unprepared for serious war" (Viktor SUVOROV in his book *The Icebreaker*) In fact, the German Ostheer entered on June 22, 1941 with - inadequate material equip<sup>ing</sup>. Thus, at the beginning of the Russian campaign the German Wehrmacht had 7146 guns available on the entire Eastern Front, while at the beginning of the French campaign in May 1940, 7184 could be mustered.

The starting conditions were extremely favorable for the German side. After the end of the Western campaign, the captured war material of the French, Belgians and English of about 180 divisions was available to the Reich. Among them were almost 5000 armored vehicles.

It had also succeeded in essentially offsetting the losses of the French campaign as early as September 1940 through ongoing production.<sup>1</sup>

As late as 1939/40, Germany's severe shortage of strategic raw materials had placed tight limits on the factory output of armaments. The opportunity to change this had opened up after the occupation of the Benelux countries as well as France. From aluminum to uranium, the strategic raw materials and war reserves of Western Europe had fallen into the hands of the Germans everywhere. The German-Soviet pact was also having an effect: Russia not only supplied sought-after shortage raw materials, oil and agricultural goods but via the long-distance railroad it was possible to import natural rubber from Asia in large quantities

However, the material limits of German armaments for 1940/41, extended by the fortunes of war, were not exploited. Instead of the well-known German organizational talent, disorder, chaos and lies took their place

The Chief of Army Armament and Commander of the Reserve Army, Colonel General Friedrich FROMM, saw no reason for hasty action, although

he was faced with the task of making preparations for an expansion of the army.

He was close to the resistance, as was the head of the Wehrwirtschafts- und Rüstungsamt des Heeres, General Georg THOMAS. THOMAS was - directly subordinate to Field Marshal KEITL in the OKW. His task was to anticipate all the Army's needs for food, equipment, rolling stock, weapons, ammunition, etc. in accordance with GOERING, who held the role of commissioner of the Four-Year Plan.

preparation of development and procurement requirements, procurement and distribution of weapons, equipment, supplies and tires, and the planning and distribution of troop housing fell within the purview of the Allgemeines Heeresamt (AHA). In many areas, such as replacement, replacement organization, and motor transport, the offices of the Allgemeines Heeresamt were responsible not only for the Army but for the entire Wehrmacht. Under the leadership of the resisting General OLBRICHT, it exercised a considerable part of the functions of a war ministry.

This makes it clear that the inaccurate information received by the OKW through FROMM'S, THOMAS'S, and OLBRICHT'S offices, any unreported delay in fabrication or transportation, naturally had the most serious consequences, both for the OKW in planning operations<sup>1</sup> and most especially for the Landser at the front.

There are enough examples that many things did not work here. Even the binding determination of the stock of existing armored fighting vehicles proved to be "extraordinarily difficult." Thus one handled with inventory figures in front of the key date 1 September 1940, which fluctuated between 4833 and 3563! These unbelievable differences,

which probably resulted from double counting of tanks, some of which were in the process of being refitted, made any planning just as difficult as determining the total requirement

In the spring of 1941, no one knew what ammunition production figures were actually achievable<sup>1</sup> In the same way, it proved impossible to determine reliably which weapons would be available on April 1, 1941, in order then to be able to determine the extent of the necessary new industrial ammunition production after deducting the already existing ammunition stocks. The Chief of Army Armament demonstrably supplied false ammunition requirements here. Unbelievable things were going on here. In the final analysis, this was nothing other than the first nail in the coffin of the German Eastern Army, even before the order to attack was given.

According to the wishes of the Third Reich leadership, the material requirements for waging war in the East to meet by April 1, 1941, raw material requirements were. However, sufficient production capacities were not made time.

When HITLER, immediately after the conclusion of the visit of Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, met with those responsible for army armament

an overview of the status and prospects of the Rüstungs, there was no question that drastic interventions in the Rüstungs process were necessary. They

did not take place at that time. Instead, lies and tricks were used to conceal actual situation and leadership.

Thus an attempt was made to conceal the deficiencies of German armament. Wehrwirtschafts- und Rüstungsamts statement of material Wehrmacht Rüstung for the period from September 1, to April 1, 1941. To this end, General THOMAS announced that a "tremendous increase in material equipment of the Wehrmacht" had been achieved and that the programs had been "by large fulfilled in spite of the difficulties." Again, clearly wrong figures were supplied, inappropriate things were omitted and statistical tricks were used.

Thus, in the inventory list of April 1, 1941, concerning the stockpiling of ammunition, some information was missing altogether, although it had still been present in interim balance sheet of February 12, 1941.

example of the heavy infantry gun 33 shows how statistical tricks were used. According to planning, 1170 heavy infantry guns 33 were needed. If, as calculated, 373 guns of this type were not produced in the seven-month production period for the preparation of >Barbarossa<, the relative deficit amounted to 4.35 percent of slg. 33. The absolute shortfall, however, increased from 27.43 to 31.96 percent. In other words, of the 1170 heavy infantry guns needed, only 797 had been produced, a fact obscured by the inappropriate percentage figure.

In fact, according to experts, the absolute deficit of individual types of weapons and ammunition was so much lower than the total requirement calculated as necessary that the material equipment the Eastern Army had to be classified as insufficient to achieve its task.

In any case, HITLER was unable to get a realistic overview in the spring of 1941.

It is therefore worth taking a closer look at the General Army Office, whose main task was to provide the Army with everything it needed to maintain its striking power and fulfill its tasks. Head of the General Army Office (AHA) from 15 February 1940 was General Friedrich OLBRICHT.

Today, many see the hand of the Resistance in OLBRICHT's transfer to the head of the Army Office, because it meant that "a man from the closest circle around BECK" WHO WAS determined to act had come to a

French Citroen truck at rest in Russia. Without the production of the French industry, the Eastern campaign would hardly have been possible. (Source: Author)

key position in the Wehrmacht. <sup>1</sup> In view of the close contact between OLBRICHT and leading resistance circles at the time, as well as Chief of Staff HALDER's ambivalent attitude toward HITLER'S conduct of the war, such an assumption seems reasonable. <sup>2</sup>

It is proven today that General OLBRICHT used his high office to resist the Third Reich. <sup>1</sup> In doing so, he attempted to counteract the German war<sup>^^^</sup> through official channels. Furthermore, his position was considered ideally suited to participate in building a conspiracy against HITLER as well as to develop and put into action plans for a coup d'état. Typical of General OLBRICHT was his remark to General REINHARDT: "I'll go along with any nonsense." This phrase, often used by <sup>^</sup>an was meant, however, in such a way that he regarded it as his task not to go along with everything (a fortiori no "nonsense" in his opinion), but as a possibility "to use all his influence about a different course through official channels." that this direct action was at the expense of the German soldiers at the front

The American document <sup>^</sup>WW/7708 from the secret archives of the U.S. State Department, published in 1973, points in the direction that Generals THOMAS and OLBRICHT were not only active in disrupting German rüs<sup>^</sup>rngs preparations for the Eastern campaign. <sup>3</sup> This document includes not only English and American secret reports. Undoubtedly, the contents of German files of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) and the Gestapo, captured by the victorious powers in 1945 also included here Whether Soviet secret material exchanged between the Allies during the war also found its way into this CIA documentation cannot be considered proven.

One of the explosive findings of this U.S. report is undoubtedly that General Georg THOMAS, Chief of the Department of Economics and Armaments at the OKW, as well as General Friedrich OLBRICHT, Chief of the General Army Office and permanent deputy to the Commander of the Replacement

Army (General FROMM), passed secret information about the agent GISEVIUS to the "Red Chapel" and thereby also to the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

General OLBRICOT'S resistance activities do not fall within the scope of this book. It is rather a question of whether he was partly responsible for the conspicuous failure of the German armament preparations of 1940/41. The fact is that he was extraordinarily cautious in everything he did and never chose a mode of expression that could have been "pinned down". However, it is clear from a statement made to his general staff officer, LÜBBEN, ON THE eve of the German preemptive strike that he knew what the situation was with regard to the weapons equipment and supplies he was making available to the army: "We both, LÜBBEN, know exactly the army that is to cross the border there. I tell you today: our German army is a wind in these steppes!"

The insufficient material preparation of >Unternehmen Bar- barossa< can therefore not be explained by the alleged conviction of the German planners that the Eastern campaign would be completed quickly and victoriously

### **Just coincidence? Too small tanks with too short guns: The fate of the German tank weapon 1941 /1942**

The backbone of the German Wehrmacht during "Operation Barossa" was the Panzerwaffe.

But: With **180 Panzer I**, **746 Panzer II** and **722 Panzer 38** (t) more than half of the German P<sup>^</sup>ers deployed in the East in **1941** consisted of vehicles whose unsuitability for this campaign had actually already been established beforehand.<sup>2</sup> Experience with the "Legion Condor" in the Spanish Civil War had already proved the inadequacy of the German Panzer I, as mentioned above, while before Warsaw the Panzer II had been bogged down in the fire of the Polish antitank guns. The early Panzer III and IV had been able to hold their own technically against the heavy British and French tanks in France in **1940** only with the greatest difficulty. The Panzer III and IV had also been developed as early as **1931/1932**.

Although HITLER had again demanded stronger armament for the tanks in a meeting on **18 February 1941**, the Army Ordnance Department's delivery schedule specified that half of the calculated new tank inventory with a cutoff date of **1 April 1941** would consist of light combat armor.

of Type II tanks.<sup>1,2</sup> In a memorandum of the same date, the Army Weapons Office also argued against the establishment of assembly line production for tanks was clear that only with the help of such mass production would it be possible to increase the number of tanks produced. The army officers also wanted to prefer small series production runs as before, despite the threat of the Eastern campaign: a more than questionable approach in a world war!

General Friedrich ü  
BRICHT was appointed  
on 15.  
Appointed Chief of the  
General Army Office  
the Army High Command  
in 1940. He made ear  
contact with the  
Resistance. On 20.  
1944, after the  
assassination attempt on  
HITLER his superior  
FROMM

At the beginning of "Unternehmen Barbarossa" the large proportion of Czech and French looted tanks then showed how small the number of combat vehicles resulting from German tank production was. These vehicles were of highly variable quality.

But the Panzer III and IV were also to prove inadequate after the emergence of the T-34 and KV-1.

The Panzer III was the standard vehicle of the German armored divisions at that time. Because of the armament of this vehicle, there had been fundamental differences of opinion even before the war. Guderian demanded a powerful 5 cm Kampfwagenkanone, while the Heereswaffenamt considered a 3.7 cm gun sufficient and prevailed. At least Guderian managed to keep the turret swivel large enough to allow at least the retrofitting of a more powerful gun.

In July 1941, the actual inventory of the entire German Army was 1560 Panzer IIIs. Let us consider how these were composed:

350 of them still had the completely obsolete 3.7 cm gun. 1090 had a short 5 cm gun L/42.

965 Panzer III was deployed on the Eastern Front in June 1941. In the course of the fighting, however, it became apparent that, in addition to the vulnerability of the vehicle's side armor to Soviet infantry anti-tank guns, the short 5 cm gun and especially the 3.7 cm Kanone could not penetrate the front armor of the new Soviet KV and T-34 tanks. German crews were thus forced to out-flank the new enemy tanks in loss-making maneuvers to put them out of action from the side or the rear.

While the T-34 could apply effective hits on Panzer III from a distance of 1000 m, this was only possible from a distance of 200 m in the case of the standard German tanks with the 5 cm KwK L/42. The long 5 cm gun L/60 used in a later Ausf. G could

then penetrate the front of a T-34 at least to a combat distance of less than 500 meters.

The decision of the Army Weapons Office to install the short 5 cm L/42 gun in the Panzer III and not, as HITLER HAD instructed, the already available gun with a barrel length of L/60, took terrible revenge. - Hypocritically, they emphasized as a justification that the shorter barrel had been chosen because a gun barrel projecting beyond the profile of the combat vehicle could subsequently influence the mobility in the terrain. These gentlemen were never at a loss for excuses.<sup>1</sup>

On April 18, 1941, during a demonstration of armored equipment, HITLER had noticed that the Army Weapons Office had installed a 5-cm L/60 cannon in the Panzer IIIs instead of the 5-cm L/42 cannon he had ordered. He took great offense at this violation of orders, which wasted German tank crews a great deal of blood.

Despite the now accelerated production of the longer L/60 guns, it still took until January 1942 before the first 34 Panzerkampfwagen IIIs could be delivered with the new weapon.

In the case of the Panzer III, there were further seemingly inexplicable failures. The Army Ordnance Department. These mainly concerned its manufacture. There was virtually no coordination of Panzer III production between the various companies. That there was method behind this became apparent when the Army Ordnance Office went so far as to prohibit an exchange of experience between the companies involved in hull production, striking that here there was a thoroughly structured assembly line production with main and auxiliary cycle lines in the manufacture of the Panzer III!<sup>1</sup>

Even the heaviest German tank at the time, the Panzerkampfwagen IV, was not initially mass-produced. In July 1941, its total inventory amounted to 572 units, 41 of which were still being repaired. Only 493 Panzer IVs took part in the Eastern campaign on July 22, 1941.

At first, it was superior to the mass of Soviet tank units consisting mostly of light models until the T-34, KW 1 and 2 appeared here as well. Now the short 7.5 cm KWK L/24 of the Panzer IV was completely inferior to the Russian tank guns. It achieved hardly any effect even at short range.

By April 1942, HITLER had insisted that the short KWK L/24 be replaced by the long-tube KWK L/40. That spring, the new tank models arrived on the Eastern Front.

Only with this long 7.5 cm KWK L/43 (later L/48) it was not only possible to fight all enemy tanks, but even to achieve superiority over the T-34/76.

This means that until the first Panzer IVs with the long 7.5 cm gun were delivered in April/May 1942, the German tank force had no tank

Against HITLER's order the Army Weapons Office installed the short gun. It was no match for the new T-34s. Was it really just stupidity?



equivalent to the Soviet T- 34 and KW types.

It is completely inexplicable that the introduction of the Panzer IV with the long 7.5 cm gun took so long afterlong been clear from the experience of the Western campaign that this was necessary

Here, too, a decision on the new long 7.5 cm combat vehicle gun was made long beforehand, on March **13, 1941**, at a meeting at the Krupp-AG Essen company. After a lot of time had been senselessly wasted with shorter gun designs, it was not until November **1941 that the** order for a new long combat vehicle gun was placed with the Krupp and Rhei^netall companies.

1' 2

### **Unarmored armored infantrymen -an omission with fatal consequences**

Besides the tank, the escort infantry was the second main weapon of the armored divisions of the German Blitzkrieg concept. The four panzer groups formed in June **1941** for >Unternehmen Barbarossa < were also - subordinated to motorized escort infantry. Like armored armies, these large armored units formed the spearhead of the German advance to Russia, where they could prove their mobility during the advance across the endless steppes. <sup>3</sup>

The escort infantry was originallyformedfrom motorized infantry forces They were still tied exclusively to roads and trails.

According to the new German concept, however, they were to be able to follow the tanks in off-road attacks. For this purpose, they had to be not only cross-country motorized but also armored.

Two suitable types of infantry fighting vehicle (SPW) were developed for this purpose before the war and had alreadyused with great successthe Polish campaign and in France

Nevertheless, by the start of the Russian campaign, only onecompanyper division out of a total of **20** companies of the two infantry regiments of each armored division had been equipped with armored personnel carriers. All other companies were provided with the usual trucks, which were often not even capable of off-road use. The existing half-track armored personnel carriers disappeared from the operational units at a breathtaking rate by **1942** due to ^sufficient replacements because ofwear and losses.

Thus, the vast majority of infantry had tofollowa tank attackonly dismounted or sitting on the tankThisoftenmeantthe tanks had to proceed without infantry protection or that the infantry usually suffered heavy casualties in the attack without protectionTrucks and cars also offered no protection against artillery and small arms fireother than mobility as a stop

Emergency replacement for the withheld infantry fighting , from above: ' Opel Blitz  
lto, modified as makeshift infantry fighting vehicle 'Henschel 33D1

i Opel flash 3to

4>Mule< as a makeshift infantry fighting vehicle.

Figures (modified from BISHOP and CULVER/MURPHY).

By a grand-sounding order dated June 5, 1942, the motorized riflemen were then renamed >Panzergrenadiere<.

The reason for this insufficient equipment before the beginning of the Eastern campaign was the far too low production of armored personnel carriers. While in 1940 estimated need of 7000 to 8000 3 ton armored personnel carriers for the 21 armored divisions, only 348 of them were produced in the same year! The Economic Armament Office in the OKH (General THOMAS) had previously rejected the classification of infantry fighting vehicles in the SS priority level demanded by the Army because of alleged "overload and strain" on the industry<sup>1</sup> and thought that the promotion of infantry fighting vehicle production would have a detrimental effect on the "production of heavy tanks or the most urgent naval and air force productions".

The whole thing becomes all the more strange, because the WiRüAmt (Wehrwirtschaft- und Rüstungsamt) of the army fully recognized the importance of these infantry fighting vehicles!

Instead, General ÜLBRIGHTS Heeresrüstungsamt (Army Armament Office) was asked from there to eliminate, if possible, the difficulties existing with the main suppliers and subcontractors. As was expected, this proved >not possible<, and in the whole of 1941 the Reich produced just 947 medium Sd. Kfz 351 were produced. The even lower production of the light SPW Sd. Kfz. 250 at the same time is unknown until today. This denotes here the >artificial chaos< of the German army armament in 1941.

Things were very different when it was much too late. Under Minister SPEER, 4250 medium SPWs alone rolled off the assembly lines in 1943. In 1944, the number rose to 7800 units of the medium SPW and 1690 of the light SPW.

This shows what would have been possible already in 1941 / 1942 - if only one had wanted!

In 1943, the plagued escort infantry received, at least in part all-terrain vehicles of the >Maultier< type. These were unarmored 2.5-ton Opel Blitz trucks with wheels in front and sliding tracks in the rear. Even attacks behind the tanks were driven with these mule trucks.

assertion only the low capacity of German industry in the years 1940-1942 was to blame for this in infantry equipment motorized in falls short.

If enough armored personnel carriers had been available in 1941, they could have been used to overcome the mud in the fall before Moscow. The wanton neglect of armored personnel carriers (SPWs) is a gross omission that

helped decide the Eastern campaign in 1941<sup>1</sup>

### **Helpless against the tank tide: Why was the >Heeresanklopfgerät< not replaced in time?**

One of the greatest, downright negligent mistakes of the Army Ordnance Office under General ULBRICHT was the inadequate equipment of the German Army and especially of the German infantry with anti-tank weapons.

At the beginning of the Eastern campaign, the number of about 35 anti-tank guns at each division seemed to be sufficient. The most disastrous aspect of this, however, was the inadequate caliber. Only 3.7 cm was the standard caliber at the Wehrmacht's tank destroyer divisions in 1941.

Very occasionally, there was only the Czech 4.7 cm defense gun or the new 5 cm Pak 38.

It had been known since May 1940 that the German 3.7 cm Pak had no chance against the heavy French tanks and the British MK 2 tanks.

Against the T-34 and KW tanks of the Russians, the standard German gun was completely ineffective. When, according to prisoner testimonies, became known that the 3.7 cm Pak would make a sound like knocking when hitting the armor of heavy Russian tanks, this PAK was also unflatteringly called >Heeresanklopfgerät<. But even the new 5 cm Pak, which was only introduced, did not satisfy when the new Russian tanks appeared. Thus, the T-34 could be stopped by the 5 cm Pak only at 500 m with luck from the side or a lucky hit in the tracks.

In fact, however, a German 7.5 cm Pak with high penetrating power had been ordered before 1939. It would have been ready for introduction. The Army Ordnance Office, however, considered its production superfluous despite the experiences of 1940! This is all the more surprising since, according to statements made by Chief of Staff General HALDER before the start of the Eastern campaign, it was not certain whether the numerous Soviet tanks really represented only low-value material. HALDER DID not think that surprises could be ruled out.

Although the German defense services received information about the new

T-34 and KW tanks had already received in good time beforehand, there was again no order for the new 7.5 cm anti-tank gun.

It was commissioned only when news of the appearance of Russian heavy tanks at the front in July 1941 could no longer be denied.

Thus, the first 7.5 cm anti-tank guns were not issued to the troops until April 1942 - a year later than would have been possible. Experts agree that some of the Wehrmacht's combat operations would have been different if the German Army had been better equipped with Panzerabwehrkanonen in 1941/42.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Secret Book, or: Why Was the Russian Alternative to the Blitzkrieg Concept Ignored?**

Time and again, the Germans wondered why the Soviets were able to field army after army despite all their blitzkrieg successes. No matter how much ground they conquered, the country's forces seemed almost

inexhaustible.

While after six months of fighting in December 1941 practically nothing remained of the old Red Army, which still lay on the Bug River in June, a new Red Army had come out of nowhere to counterattack before Moscow, and - no matter what was conquered in 1942- again and again they encountered new, completely unexpected resistance forces of the enemy

Already during the battles around Smolensk the Germans should and could have noticed that the Russians had found an effective counter-strategy to the blitzkrieg concept

This was the concept of Georgi ISSERSON,<sup>1</sup> an outstanding theorist who had developed deep warfare in a modern war.

The >Operation in Depth< was developed by ISSERSON between 1928 and 1932. ISSERSON also wanted to avoid the positional warfare of World War I and thus developed an alternative to both positional and blitz warfare.

According to ISSERSON, the major industrialized nations, through their gigantic industrial capabilities, were able to avoid deciding the war in a single battle by creating a second or third after breaking through the first front line and finding new industrial opportunities to prolong the war.

ISSERSON's thoughts were then advocated by leading thinkers of the Red Army 1941-1945. The theorist himself sat in a Soviet penal camp during the war. Only STALIN's death freed him.

It is striking that ISSERSON's thoughts have not been appreciated in the West until today

His 1932 book, *The Development of Operative Art*, was published in 10,000 copies. The Germans, despite secrecy, managed to get hold of a copy. Nevertheless, despite its mention in the *Militärisches Wochenblatt* in 1935, this work was not noticed in the least by the German planners

Even for the period when the Germans, up to the highest leadership, were increasingly puzzled about the almost inexhaustible resources of the Red Army, no evidence was found that anyone had remembered ISSERSON's >Operation in the Deep<.

The question is whether there was simply incompetence or intention behind it, the work of ISSERSON, of whose absolute secrecy the Deut-

*How Germany Prepared for the Eastern Campaign* 97 see were fully informed, completely left out. The book, which the Germans got hold of through unclear channels, is considered to have disappeared.

To this day, only excerpts of ISSERSON's theories are known. His

complete works are still considered a state secret, despite Perestroika.

### **Were Stalin's inadequate German**

#### **> Barbarossa< preparations known?**

In his offensive speech of May 5, 1941, STALIN revealed that he knew about Germany's inadequate armament preparations for the planned eastern campaign:<sup>1</sup> "They imagine that they can do everything, that their army is strong enough, and that there is no point in rearming it. An army that thinks itself invincible, that thinks it needs no perfecting doomed to defeat"

This shows that traitors in leading positions had also given STALIN precise information about this. However, these intrinsically correct findings may have given STALIN false self-assurance as the German invasion drew ever closer. Despite insufficient material preparation, the German war machine was to prove a deadly threat especially in the early stages of >Operation Barbarossa<

#### 4. Chapter

**>Barbarossa< breaks loose**

**Despite all obstacles**

**Germany's victory on the Eastern Front  
was within reach in the fall of 1941**

the night of May 10-11, 1941, the >Blitz< of the Luftwaffe against England reached its climax with a tremendous night attack on London. That night, German planes had carried out over 500 sorties in the English night sky. In the process, some crews took off four times.

Despite the English night fighter and flak defense over London, which we like to call so successful today, Göring's airmen could have continued like this for a long time with a loss rate of 3 percent. Therefore, it was a great surprise to many of the crews involved in the night raids on England when they were suddenly taken out of action over England in the spring of 1941 for no apparent reason.

Typical of this are the experiences of the Junkers Ju-88-equipped 2nd/KG1. The group was suddenly recalled to the homeland, where their Ju-88 A-5s had their long-range fuel tanks removed from the fuselage. In their place, they installed bombing scaffolds. At the same time, the undersides of the aircraft were stripped of their midnight black camouflage paint.

Now speculation was rife among the crews. The long and dangerous missions in night skies over England seemed clearly a thing of the past. But what would come now?

With aircraft that had only wing tanks left and equipped with internal weapons droppers for bombs weighing 250 kg or less, the writing was on the wall that the future role was to be a tactical one for ground support. But where and against whom? <sup>1</sup>

Theories ran rampant. Some of the younger crews were convinced that the long-delayed invasion of England was finally about to start and that their Ju-88s would soon be used to support the Wehrmacht's advance through the southern counties of England. Moving the planes to Africa to join Rommel - was ruled out because no tropical equipment was fitted. The only alternative was an eastern deployment. In May 1941, the German-Soviet non-aggression pact signed shortly before the outbreak of war was and seemed to be working to the mutual benefit of both nations. Therefore, more than a few crews were convinced that Germany and Russia were about to join forces for a combined attack southward against the oil fields of Persia. Germany had actually proposed something similar to Russian Foreign Minister Molotov in November 1940, but the airmen were unaware of it.

Then, after more than two weeks of rumors and inactivity, it started. KG1 moved to airfields near the Baltic coast.

To disguise the movement, the Ju-88s were not allowed to move there en masse but were dispatched in widely spaced single flights or in groups of three. Then, on June 17, 1941, the group commanders, Captain



Otto STAMM and Major Walter LEHWESS-LITZMANN, OPENED THE sealed green envelopes. They contained the final destinations of their units. Both groups were then to move to East Prussia, near Königsberg and to an airfield on the coasts of the Curonian Spit.

Now the brutal truth began to dawn on everyone: HITLER seemed about to launch a two-front war by preparing a surprise attack on the Soviet Union. Any lingering residual doubts dissipated over the next few days as truckload after truckload of bombs and munitions were delivered to the two airfields

Finally, on the evening of June 21, 1941, the squadrons were assembled and HITLER'S call to arms was read aloud: "Soldiers of the Eastern Front, after months of great anxiety and self-imposed silence, the time has now come, my soldiers, for me to speak to you quite openly. There are about 160 Russian divisions on our border. For weeks, continuous violations of this border have been taking place, not only in our country, but also in the far north, as well as in Romania. Russian patrols felt their way into German Reich territory and could be driven back only after a prolonged firefight. At this moment, soldiers of the Eastern Front, a deployment is taking place which is the largest in extent and scope the world has ever seen. In league with Finnish divisions, our comrades stand with the victor of Narvik on the northern Arctic Ocean. In Romania, on the banks of the Pruth, on the Danube, up to the shores of the Black Sea, German and Romanian soldiers are united under Head of State ANTONESCU. If this greatest front in the history of the world is now moving forward, it is not only to create the conditions for the final conclusion of the great war in general, or to protect the countries concerned at the moment, but to save the whole of European civilization and culture.... «

All this secrecy would not have been necessary. Already since the earliest first plans in summer 1940 for a possible operation in the East, Russia's leadership was always informed about HITLER'S plans in all details in a timely manner. The >largest front in world history< was d^m also actually not concentrated on the German side, but was getting ready to attack Germany behind the Russian border. There were not about 1(50 Russian divisions at the border, as HITLER announced, but more than twice that number.

The lack of surprise was compounded an incredible underestimation the enemy and an overestimation of German strength on the part of the top German leadership, which had thus provided insufficient forces for far too wide-ranging objectives

Instead, German planners expected success from the same blitzkrieg concept that had proved successful against Poland in 1939, in the west in 1940, and against YugoslaviaGreece in the spring of 1941

But the fact that this confidence, which today seems reckless, could be - attributed to the same cause as STALIN'S lack of surprise must have been almost inconceivable to the soldiers who, in the early morning hours of June 22, 1941, waited full of trepidation for the order to attack.

The trap into which the German Reich was to fall was alreadysetbefore the enterprise began

### **The battle for the heavily fortified >Lemberger Zipfel. The bunkers of Wielki Dzial**

Success of >Operation Barbarossa< depended on the Wehrmacht's ability to quickly make breaches in the fortified lines STAUN HAD mustered on the Soviet Union's western border. Although the Soviets had disarmed large parts of their fortress lines in the course of their own attack planning, there were installations for which the Germans had a salutary respect

Among ^those was Wielki Dzial. **in the** greatest haste and under time pressure the Germans looked for ways out to prevent time delays thereby the Russian fortifications.

On 2 April 1941, the heavy artillery division 833 with the huge self-propelled mortars >Gerät Karl< or >Gerät 040< had been established. On 14 May 1941, the first battery with two 60-centimeter mortars >Gerät 040< was attached to the 17th Army. It transferred the mortars >Adam< and >Eva< to the Lviv area, where it was planned to destroy the bunkers of Wielki Dzial with their huge concrete-breaking shells. However, several reports indicate that it never happened because the first battery was not used at all. Due to "technical problems" it was not operational on 23 July 1941, during the attack on Wielki Dzial. It was then transferred home at the end of June 1941 without having fired a shot. There it was converted to conventional 21 cm 18 mortars.<sup>1</sup>

Also in April 1941, the Daimler-Benz company in cooperation with Renault in Paris, converted 24 captured French >Char< B-1bis tanks into flamethrower tanks. In the process, the 75 mm gun was replaced by a flamethrower whose fuel was carried inside. The intention was to use it to drive attacks on heavily fortified bases.<sup>2,3</sup>

On 5 June 1941, the eve of >Operation Barbarossa<, Panzer-Abteilung (Flamm) 102 was formed in France. It was assigned

allocated all 24 B-1bis flame tanks. In addition, there were six standard B-1bis tanks. They served as command and fire support vehicles.

unit's distinguishing mark was a spitting snake, an apt allusion to the appearance of the flamethrower beam as it lambasted directly overhead toward its target

After the launch of >Barbarossa<, the 102nd Tank Battalion then arrived in the German 4th Army combat area on 23 June. The following day, the battalion was detached to prepare the 24th Infantry Division for attacks on the Russian forts at Wielki Dzial

At about 7:5 a.m. on 24 June 1941, the Flammpanzers of Panzer Abteilung (F) 102 attacked, immediately followed by infantry sappers who were to place explosive charges in the embrasures of the bunkers. However, the fl<sup>an</sup>- tanks were held up by anti-tank ditches and heavy terrain and thus could not provide effective support to the infantry. Only two bunkers could be held in check by the Flammpanzers with flame oil. Finally, the infantry assault engineers had to proceed alone, suffering heavy losses

On 26 June 1941, the 102nd Tank Battalion was assigned to the 296th Infantry Division, but now it encountered "mechanical problems" with the French tanks. On the morning of July 29, 1941, sappers, covered by artillery and 8.8 cm. flak, made passes in the armored obstacles, clearing the way for the tanks. Two of the 24 >Char< B (f) could now drive forward to knock out the Soviet bunkers. However, both Flamm tanks were then hit by 75 mm guns from Bunker 3A of the fortress and caught fire. Their crews were able to get out.

*Left:* Char B flame tank bogged down in unsuitable terrain in front of border fortress Wielki Dzial is camouflaged against enemy view. (Collection: Author). *Right:* Sensational combat photo taken on 29 June 1941 during the attack on Wielki Dzial. One of the two Char B-1bis flame-thrower tanks that came through to the front in Russian defensive fire. The black smoke came from the tank's flamethrower, which it used to try to destroy a Russian bunker. In the process, it hit by the guns of another bunker. This is recognizable by the clouds of smoke behind the tank. All other Char-B tanks the terrain (Source: Author)

The flame tanks were able to successfully spray into the embrasures of bunkers 1 to 4, but the flame oil did not penetrate the ball mounts of the bunkers. Some were even able to continue firing anyway.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the

infantry pioneers succeeded in knocking down bunkers 1 to 4, so that the 4th Army could drive the remaining defenders out of Wielki Dzial on the same day.

In this way, the last obstacle to a German invasion of Russia was removed after five days of fighting.

The 102nd Tank Battalion then joined the 17th German Army on June 30, 1941, and was finally disbanded on July 17, 1941.

Flammpanzer B.2 were then still later used successfully in several versions for years in Russia, Yugoslavia, France and Holland

But what if the battles for the border fortress of Wielki Dzial did not take place in the right way? There are indications for this: Ernst KEES was a radio operator on the >Char< B-1 lead tank of the battalion commander. The battalion commander

Colonel Kurt HIRSCHBERGER was a friend of the KEES family and told his radio operator before the start of the operation not to be afraid and to feel safe with him. They had requested extra tanks, which were much too heavy and unsuitable for the planned deployment area and would remain there. That is exactly what happened! KEES was outraged by these statements of his commander. He told his family afterwards that he considered this an outrage. As a result, he said, the infantry had to proceed alone with great losses when the tanks stopped.

Also, the fact that the >Karl< devices were not used because of alleged techni

two missiles were unable to fire a single shot at Wielki Dzial due to defects questions as to whether these two events were more than a coincidence

In fact, at the same time that the first battery of Heavy Artillery Division 833 found itself unable to operate because of "technical problems," the second >Karl< battery was used without problems to pound the Brest citadel with its giant shells. By 24 June 1941, the battery had fired almost all of its 36 allotted shells.

Even later, the >Karl< units continued to be used without any problems in the East and West until the end of the war.

So it happened that for 5 days it was necessary to fight for a single border fortress. The foreseeable consequences were loss of time and much spilled blood. It is noticeable that the battles at Wielki Dzial have never been mentioned in the literature. Perhaps there is a dark point there, over which one wants to put the cloak of silence.

Tank radio operator Ernst KEES - without him the information about the events at Wielki Dzial would probably never have become known. (Photo: Author)

Could it have been different? Soldiers of Panzer Abteilung (F) 1 02 inspect the bunkers of Wielki Dzial after the end of the fighting for the >Lemberg Zipfel< (left). When General JESCHONNEK'S deputy in the Luftwaffe command staff - inspected the conquered areas in mid-July 1941, he wrote: "... enormous fortifications - partly unfinished - had been laid out to secure the Lemberg Zipfel." > Barbarossa < - could already have gotten into trouble here. Was this where the setback for Germany sought by the conspirators was to begin? (Sources: Author)

As the German panzer troops rapidly advanced eastward, they had to make a terrible discovery: maps of the USSR, which the OKH (Army High Command) had given them, did not correspond to reality in any way: almost all the communications marked as roads turned out to be unpaved sand<sup>1</sup>

One can easily imagine the horror of the tank commanders at this incredible mistake.

There would have been enough data available to print proper maps of the real conditions in large parts of the western Soviet Union. The reasons why this was omitted lead us into the area of the famous *Rowehl* squadrons.

As early as 1940, members of the unit also called *>(F) Aufklärungsgruppe Ob.d.L.<* or *>Langstreckenaufklärungsgruppe des Oberbefehlshabers der Luftwaffe<* with the unit code letter TS noted that their incredibly accurate-

Publication of the German General Staff (Military Geographical Service) of May 1941. - Why was available information not incorporated? From: Janusz PIEKAL- KIEWICZ, *The Battle for Moscow*, Pawlak, Herrsching 1989, p. 11).

results of the reconnaissance were not properly exploited by the high command. Instead, internal political considerations often "decided on the utilization or non-utilization of the aerial espionage results." <sup>2</sup> Whatever one is to understand by it!

Some even went so far as to accuse Admiral CANARIS and the head of the Foreign Air Powers Division in the Luftwaffe General Staff, Colonel (later General) Josef *>Beppo<* SCHMID, that the war could have been won if only these gentlemen had used the appropriate intelligence. <sup>3 4-5</sup>

The exciting story of the reconnaissance group Ob.d.L. would go beyond the scope of this book. As early as 1935, however, *Rowehl's* RECONNAISSANCE group, then still under civilian camouflage, had - flown clandestine high-altitude reconnaissance flights over Russia using flight routes of the Standard-Lufthansa in order to

Incorrect maps soon  
caused terrible traffic  
jams on unpaved Russian  
roads were marked as  
"well-built traffic routes"  
Did they really not know  
any better? Here's a 55-  
unit. Note the thoughtful  
faces of the soldiers  
while looking at the  
>road<. (From: Eckhart  
BARTELS, *Opel. Military  
Vehicles 1906-1956*,  
Eggolsheim o.J.)

blur. One of the first missions was to take aerial photographs of Soviet naval base in Kronstadt, as well as in Leningrad and the industrial centers near Minsk and Pskov. From May to October 1940, mainly Russian fortifications were photographed. Thereafter, HITLER ordered a break in reconnaissance missions over the Soviet Union so as not to unnecessarily burden the Molotov trip. It was not until the spring of 1941 that these flights were resumed with the greatest haste, and by June 1941 over 500 reconnaissance missions counted by the Soviets were probably many more clandestine flights<sup>1</sup>

From mid-April to mid-June 1941, reconnaissance flights became increasingly systematic and served mainly to update old photographs from the earlier months. Priority of the new reconnaissance ranged from the German-Russian demarcation line, the most important target, to areas around Rovno, Lutsk and Kiev. It is always claimed today that the Rowehl missions could not reconnoiter more than about 300 km into Russian space. In fact, however, Focke-Wulff FW-200 reconnaissance planes disguised as civilian aircraft flew imaging flights as far as the Urals. Siegfried K. NEMEYER who later became well known in American postwar service proved himself here particular

Dogmatists still tell us that the reconnaissance flights of Gruppe Rowehl not contribute much to the assessment of the Russian army, the industrial potential or - very important - to the preparation of suitable maps of the Soviet Union. Especially land



Dornier Do 215 B-4 was secretly deployed over Russia in 1940/41 had a special camera in the cabin for mapping the terrain - nevertheless the maps were wrong at the beginning of the Barbarossa.

With the Focke-Wulff FW-200 reconnaissance aircraft, the German reconnaissance range extended far beyond the 300 km claimed

maps were considered a state secret in the Soviet Union! It is true that aerial reconnaissance over the Soviet Union began in full only in the late winter of 1940/41 and was temporarily severely limited by the weather. The results of radio reconnaissance, which then formed the basis for the approach of reconnaissance aircraft

While the results of Admiral CANARIS's defense against the Soviet Union must be described as poor, the Luftwaffe achieved incredible things. By the end of April 1941, targeting of the Soviet Union within the 300 km zone was complete. Routinely scanned were not only the White Sea ports of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, the Baltic, and northern Russia, including Leningrad, Belarus, Ukraine, and the Crimea. Here, the Moscow- Kharkov-Rostov line roughly formed the eastern boundary of the area to be flown over. Due to technical improvements in aircraft equipment, the ROWEHL Group was able to reconnoiter another 500 km into Russian territory in 1941, so that Voronezh, Stalingrad as well as the Caucasus also came under the cameras of German long-range reconnaissance. The group's at least two four-engine Focke-Wulff FW-200s undertook dar-

In addition, numerous daring long-range reconnaissance flights as far as the Urals.

A wide range of perpendicular and oblique cameras of various focal lengths with Zeiss lenses provided excellent detail in the images. Over Russia, the ROWEHL group mostly used RB30 series cameras with 75 cm focal lengths. Postwar photographs prove that ports, airfields, railroad power plants, factories, bridges and, of course, roads no longer a mystery to the experienced German aerial photographers. To a large extent, they still came from Hansa Luftbild GmbH, a Lufthansa subsidiary from the pre-war period.

Individual aerial photo evaluators possessed legendary reputations, such as a officer of the former Austrian Air Force could even recognize individual gun positions during evaluation

It is indisputable that the aerial photographs supplied by Gruppe Ro-WEHL were in any case accurate and systematic enough to produce accurate map material.

Therefore, the question arises why German troops were nevertheless supplied with false maps. These were based >quite by chance< "on wrong information of the defense of Admiral CANARIS".

This could not have been due to the processing quality and speed of the photographs. The pictures taken in risky approaches were immediately transported by air courier to Oranienburg near Berlin. There the central evaluation of the aerial photo material was located during the entire war. Here, something must have gone repeatedly >wrong<, because the available photographs were not used for map production.

It also looked like a justification for doing nothing that the General Staff's >Foreign Armies East< Division asked the Luftwaffe to complete its aerial reconnaissance by 1 March 1941, since eight weeks would be needed to print the maps and distribute them to the lowest echelons.<sup>1</sup> - But accurate maps were not produced even later, although enough time would now have been available.

This is all the more astonishing because in 1947, when planning their atomic bomb missions against the Soviet Union in the event of a new world war, the USA used exactly these captured German aerial photographs of the ROWEHL group as a basis for their planning. American information also confirmed that these photographs covered the western side of the huge country up to the Urals relatively well.<sup>2</sup>

It becomes clear that here again a German-technical top performance was wasted by the responsible gentlemen in higher positions of the Wehrmacht

American post-war sources could not explain this failure properly.

### **How the battle plan of >Heeresgruppe Mitte< came into Soviet hands on June 25, 1941.**

Just a few days into the war, one of the strangest events in the early phase of the Eastern campaign occurred.<sup>1</sup>

It began when Russian General Peter FILATOV, as commander of the newly formed 13th Army, received instructions to move with his staff to Molodechno. There was one of the largest railroad junctions on the flank of the >Western Front<. On the night of June 24,

General FILATOV received an additional order from the front commander PAVLOV proceed to the counterattack with his army, which had not yet been fully formed.

When Molodechno fell to the Germans on June 25, 1941, the area was in complete disorder. Retreating Soviet units, attacking Soviet units, German Kradschützen, refugees German tanks, Soviet tanks - everything went haywire everywhere like in a never-ending nightmare

Then, at night, General FILATOV'S column encountered a group of unclothed German officers who, certain that the battle was over for the day, had decided to take a bath. While the officers' orderlies set up tents, they bathed in the river. There they were discovered by Soviet scouts. Fifty of the >swimmers< were killed and five taken prisoner, their vehicles destroyed or among the trophies found were four bags. One contained the battle plan of >Heeresgruppe Mitte<. When General FILATOV and his staff officers took a look at it, they were startled. The map made it clear that they were facing two powerful armored armies, the one led by Guderian and the other led by Hoth. Both armies were aiming at Minsk.

While General FILATOV with the remnants of his units retreated to the north of Minsk, he had not failed to send the captured battle plan of Army Group Center by messenger to the headquarters of the Soviet >Western Front< beforehand.

Here it becomes clear that not everything that looked like a betrayal was one in the end.

### **The secret of >Stalin's German weapons< in 1941**

When the German troops were in front of Leningrad in the summer of 1941, they had to cope with heavy artillery fire. Very bad were the >heavy lumps< of ship artillery.

rumor quickly spread that after one of these attacks with heavy losses, the unexploded shell of a 20.3 cm grenade with a clear German marking had been found. It seemed inexplicable that the Russians could have heavy German artillery at their disposal!

But the surprises continued: on August 19, 1941, when VOROSHILOV'S 34 Russian Army was crushed by the X. Korps of the Wehrmacht, a Soviet military depot fell into the hands of the Germans near Dünaburg, where a lot of equipment of original German manufacture was found - among them a brand-new 8.8 cm anti-aircraft battery with the year of manufacture 1941! The soldiers understandably could not believe their eyes.<sup>1</sup>

But these oddities did not end there.

late 1941, German aircraft types clearly bearing Soviet sovereign insignia on wings and fuselage appeared more frequently. These mostly flew reconnaissance missions. These flights often detected by German air defenses only very late, as they were thought to be their own aircraft.

All these cases can be brought under a common denominator,

namely the German-Soviet pact of 1939. According to one of its follow-up agreements, Germany had undertaken to sell Russia its own most modern military developments, whether of navy, army or air force. In return, the Soviets wanted to supply Germany with valuable raw materials in large quantities.

former German heavy cruiser >Lützow< was responsible for the mysterious shelling with 20.3 cm ship's shells off Leningrad. The >Lützow< displaced 14240 GRT and was launched on July 1, 1939. Germany irresponsibly sold the ship to the USSR on February 11, 1940. The unfinished ship was then towed to Leningrad on April 15, 1940, where it was to be completed under the name >Petro-Pavlovsk<.

When the Germans attacked, the former >Lützow< was still largely unfinished. She was nevertheless used as a floating battery, anchored in the coal port of Leningrad. German troops were then fired upon from 2 x 20.3 cm twin turrets before the >Lützow< was sunk by German artillery on 17 September 1941. However, the ship sank only on an even keel. Despite being hit by another aerial bombardment in April 1942, it was raised in September 1942. In the fall of 1943, the Russians returned her to service as a floating battery under the new name >Tallinn<.

The weapons captured at Dünaburg were also from contract deliveries. In the case of the 8.8 cm Flak battery from 1941, it would be interesting to know whether it was already the brand new 8.8 cm Flak 41. It existed in 1941 just in first test specimens. Its test deployment on the German side did not take place until the end of 1942. Did the Red Army have the Flak 41 before the Wehrmacht?

Equally explainable is the origin of the German aircraft with Soviet insignia. It is known that the test pilot Fiodor OPADCHI organized a mixed reconnaissance unit of German aircraft at the end of 1941. It consisted of 12 Junkers >Ju 88<, Dornier >Do 215<, Messerschmidt >Bf 110< and >Bf 109<. Again, it can be assumed that these were the aircraft used by the

German aircraft >with the Red Star< over Berlin in 1941. In the midst of the Soviet Union's greatest distress, a crew under Valentin SOKOLOV of the 2nd Long-Range Reconnaissance Regiment flew a Dornier Do 215 B-3 as far as Berlin in November 1941. The reason for the flight, which was kept secret for many years, with the Dornier delivered to the Russians under the Hitler-Stalin Pact is unclear. Should the mission have been about dropping off material or personnel (radio operators) for the >Rote Kapelle< besides taking aerial photos of Reich capital?

Soviets purchased from the Reich in 1939/ 41.

is known that the Russian pilots not like missions on these booty planes at all. Their use was problematic, due to the lack of German fuel and lubricants as well as the necessary spare parts. Also, the chance of survival in the event of capture seemed extremely slim. This was especially true of the Soviet own air defenses. Thus, one case has become known when one of the former German planes had to make an emergency landing near Soviet lines. Here approaching Russian infantrymen pulled the pilot out of the plane and slew him without regard to the nationality markings on the plane<sup>1</sup>

Again, it is clear that not everything that clearly looks like treason stands up to scrutiny upon closer inspection.

Contrary to what many German soldiers in the 1941-1942 period were convinced, these were legally acquired technology deliveries. In their early war-time distress, the Soviets had not refrained from using these valuable weapons against the former supplier country after their evaluation.

### **Why was the relocation of Soviet industry to the East not prevented?**

Arguably one of the greatest industrial achievements of the 20th century was the relocation to the east of Soviet industrial plants threatened by the German advance and their rapid re-commissioning.

Still going back to a decree of April 29, 1927, the Eastern evacuation of Russian industry was carried out from June 29, 1941, with the greatest effort and incredible effectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

Thousands of Russian factories were evacuated to the regions east of the Urals during the first weeks of the war. In many factories, work had to be resumed in the open.

Thus, by December 1941, a total of 1523 plants, including 1360 large factories, had been relocated entirely or substantially to the East - among them 226 to the Volga, 667 to the Urals, 244 to Western Siberia, 78 to Eastern Siberia or Central Asia.

The relocated plants were the most important in Soviet industry. The largest among them covered up to 200,000 square me-

ter floor area and employed 25,000 to 30,000 workers. The workers and specialists were taken with their families to the east.

relocated. Russian sources estimate that up to 2 million railroad cars were used for the transfer

is striking that this eastward shift made possible the production miracle of Soviet armaments from 1942, was not disturbed by the Germans at all!

As early as the summer of 1941, Luftwaffe reconnaissance planes reported several times that immense Russian railroad convoys moving eastward day and night

It had been recognized early on that something monstrous was going on here. As so often with results of the German air reconnaissance in the Eastern campaign, they remained >unnoticed< by the responsible authorities

The thousands of railroad trains were not targeted by the Luftwaffe even once (!), although at that time GÖRING's aviator had air superiority

Could there be more profitable targets for the Luftwaffe's dive bombers and bomber squadrons? Since there were only a few train connections



the relocation trains were jammed for many hundreds of kilometers. A few bombs would have thrown the company into chaos. They not fall.

The great opportunity to prevent the reconstruction of the Soviet arms industry was squandered. It was never clarified who was responsible in the Air Force that this was omitted.

## **5. Chapter**

**The blitzkrieg is >gamed<**

**Was a prevented coup d'état to blame  
Eastern campaign not  
being won by Germany summer of 1941?**

At the beginning of the first half of World War II the motorized units of the German Wehrmacht scored many successes by applying the >Blitzkrieg< strategy. These triumphs, even against materially far superior opponents, can be attributed both to fighting troops and to the considered strategies and expertise of the commanders. >Barbarossa< was intended as a >Blitzkrieg<

On July 10, 1941, only three weeks after the beginning of the German attack, the Wehrmacht had already covered almost half the distance to Moscow and Leningrad and had almost reached Kiev. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet prisoners of war as well as gigantic supplies in German hands

On July 4, 1941, HITLER declared to his inner circle: "Practically, he - the Russian - has already lost the war." In the middle of the month, German advances had reached almost exactly the point predicted by pre-campaign planning

Now, however, sand came into the gear, already the preparations for the next phase progressed much slower than expected.

### **The Lie Method of the Chief of Staff**

Already since December 1940, the conflict between HITLER and his advisors from the Army High Command developed over the objectives of the Eastern campaign.

Chief of General Staff Franz HALDER, for example, said that the primary objective of the campaign must be Moscow.

However, he avoided arguing with HITLER, his superior, and instead worked on an operational plan that was in line with his own concept.

Where this plan differed from HALDER'S original plan, HALDER simply ignored the differences and went on as if he and HITLER were in >complete agreement<, although this did not correspond to the truth. The Chief of General Staff even arranged for Colonel LOSSBERG to insert the wrong words into Instruction No. 21.

When the deployment order and the attack orders for the Eastern Army were determined at the end of January 1941, they deviated considerably from HITLER'S intentions; HALDER, however, knew how to cover up this fact in his situation lectures in a manner contrary to the truth.

After HITLER issued an order on June 25, 1941, concerning the command of the operations of >Heeresgruppen Mitte< and >Süd<, HALDER merely remarked, "The old song! Nothing will be changed in our leadership by this."

He directly called for the violation of orders when he in his diary on June 29: "It is to be hoped that the middle command of the troops will

do the right thing of their own accord even without explicit orders, which we are not allowed to give because of the expression of the Führer's will to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army." With this he wanted their subordinates to ignore orders coming from above, which HALDER and VON **BRAUCHITSCH** did not want to support, but could not prevent.

This is nothing more than an attempt by the Army High Command to deceive HITLER AT a time when the Eastern campaign was still fully on schedule.

Perhaps this was exactly what the gentlemen were worried about? Another nail was forged for coffin of the German Eastern Army

### **>Unternehmen Barbarossa" derailed: the secret of Smolensk**

The surprisingly rapid gains in terrain by the beginning of July **1941** led to great confidence of victory on the German side. On July **8, 1941**, the Army High Command<sup>89</sup> of the **164** Russian units known to have been deployed up to that time were to be regarded as destroyed. **46** units were considered still capable of fighting, to which **18** units on >secondary fronts< were to be added. There was no information about the whereabouts of 11 more units. They were presumed to be reserve in the rear of the Soviet Union. Another important fact for the OKH was that of the **29** Russian armored divisions that had appeared at the front, **20** had failed completely or with strong parts. Only **9** armored divisions were still considered fully combat capable. Re-establishment of fully combat-capable units in the rear seemed impossible because of the high losses of officers and specialist personnel. The basis of these optimistic, much too low estimates, the German high command assumed that after the Soviet troops had been dealt with at Smolensk the terrain as far as the upper Volga could be taken in hand. One was oppressively superior to the enemy.<sup>1,2</sup>

In the Smolensk area, the Soviets had built a new defense line with **42** divisions in mid-July **1941**. The capital Moscow was only **400** away. The German Chief of Staff

HALDER predicted that German troops would have reached the areas around Leningrad and Moscow and the Orel-Krim line around August 25. early October, they could be on the Volga, and early November at Baku and Batumi. This would have been the return of the old Blitzkrieg times!

On July 10, 1941, Army Group Center launched its offensive toward Smolensk. Panzer Group III under Colonel General Hermann HOTH ADVANCED north, Panzer Group II under Colonel General Heinz GUERIAN south. After destroying the Soviet forces, the panzer groups were to advance in a concentric attack on Moscow. However, the mobile German tank units bypassed Dnieper crossings of Mogilev and Orsha, southwest of Smolensk had been developed into strong defensive positions by the Red Army. The city itself fell into German hands after heavy street fighting on July 16, 1941. From July 24 to August 5, 1941, over 300,000 Red Army troops with 3000 tanks were encircled. However, only a part fell into German captivity, as numerous troops of the Russians were able to break the encirclement at times in fierce breakout attempts and escaped.

In fact, the battle in the Smolensk region was a long and complicated sequence of battles. It extended from July 10 to September 10, 1941. The German offensive was followed by a complicated counteroffensive from three Soviet army fronts. This comprised the Dukhovshina Offensive of the Western Front from August 26 to September 6, 1941, the Yelnya Offensive of the Reserve Front (August 30 to September 10, 1941), and the Bryansk Front Offensive from August 29 to September 14, 1941.

The battles for Smolensk (here the town of Vitebsk, west of Smolensk I), for all their success repeatedly gave the Russians thus upset HITLER'S blitzkrieg concept.

Even though everything eventually ended in a German victory, Soviet resistance to Army Group Center's advance in the Smolensk region was much stronger and more massive than the Germans had expected

In their military strategy, STAUN, Soviet Headquarters Stavka, and Headquarters West pursued a much more sophisticated strategy than has been recognized by military science to date. They conducted a kind of war of attrition ^m weakening the advancing Wehrmacht.

The Battle of Smolensk is still considered a great operational success for the Germans. In fact, the Red Army again suffered heavy losses, hundreds of thousands of soldiers were taken prisoner, numerous pieces of war equipment were destroyed or captured

reality however the complicated sequence of battles around Smolensk had caused far greater losses to Army Group Center than is recognized today

The attrition strategy of STAUN and TIMOSHENKO was thus able to delay the German advance by two months. This created a significant delay in the German battle plan. Modern American historians therefore say that the Battle of Smolensk >derailed< the German blitzkrieg concept. <sup>1</sup>

The question now is whether there is a secret in the Kesselschlacht around Smolensk, which is not appreciated until today.

In fact, at Smolensk the Wehrmacht captured almost the entire archive of local Soviet administrative authorities, including NKVD from 1917 to 1939. The mountains of disorganized files were transported in their entirety to the German Reich. There they fell into the hands of US troops in 1945 and were shipped by them across the Atlantic. After thorough analysis, they provided first unfiltered look at living conditions in Soviet Union 1920s and 1930s when they published by Harvard University Press 1958<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the Germans also captured something quite different! Thus, in August 1941, during the capture of the command post of 16th Soviet Army east of Smolensk, two complete attack plans of the OKW had been found, as well as a copy of the recently issued order to prefer the second plan to the first. Likewise, a plan by Chief of Staff General HALDER WAS FOUND AT Briansk, which had been submitted to HITLER only two days earlier but had not yet been decided upon. <sup>3</sup>

Such short-term acts of treason could only have reached the enemy - from HITLER'S and HALDER'S closest entourage.

Now it becomes clear why the Red Army was able to hold off Heeresgruppe Mitte for eight weeks

Nevertheless, even with accurate advance knowledge of the German plans, this strategy still cost the Red Army the heaviest losses. It lost 760,000 men in the entire "Smolensk Operation" from July 10 to September 10, 1941. Nevertheless, the Russians were given much-needed time and opportunity to prepare the defense of Moscow. The concept of "Operation Barbarossa" to bring the Russian campaign to a victorious conclusion within six weeks was finally "derailed" before Smolensk.

### **The fatal loss of time in August 1941 - reason for the later German defeat?**

By the end of July 1941, HITLER'S own grand strategy, which called for a

The plan, which envisaged the north and south peninsulas and the enclosure of Moscow from the rear, met with resistance from the OKH and was actively circumvented.

Field Marshal VON BRAUCHITSCH and his staff, however, were in favor of a direct attack on Moscow by Field Marshal VON BOCK'S Army Group Center. VON BRAUCHITSCH remained in Berlin and disregarded HITLER'S orders. massive encircling movement by the Army Group

HITLER had contracted an attack of dysentery in Masuria. For fourteen days until mid-August, he suffered from diarrhea, stomach pains, nausea, limbs, chills, and fever. While the decisive controversy developed between HITLER and his generals, his ability to assert himself was thus severely hampered by physical weakness.

As early as 30 July 1941, HME had decreed that Army Group Center should switch to defense. This would make the center of the Eastern Front a kind of strategic reserve for the main wings of the attack.

HITLER'S generals were now doing what they were becoming more and more accustomed to doing: disregarding the Führer or, if not, bypassing him at every opportunity.

A wild argument now ensued, with HITLER brushing aside all the generals' arguments to take Moscow. When the general realized that he was serious, several options remained

GUDERIAN (left) and HOTH, who represent the 2nd and 3rd graders, respectively.

Armored armies commanded are visibly pleased after closing the

One of them was to obey the leader. But there were others as well. Now came into play those who wanted to change the course of history—arresting HITLER. THE focus of these conspirators was VON Bock's Heeresgruppe Mitte, the army group to which the glorious road to Moscow was now laid by HITLER.

The conspirators were so highly placed in this that it is unlikely VON Bock himself was not informed. His two leading aides also participated in the planning of the attack.

Despite the pressing situation on the Eastern Front, which demanded a decision, the representatives of Army Group Center took enough time to sound out other generals across the Wehrmacht for approval of an uprising against HITLER.

This created an interesting and unsituation in history: officers of an army that until then had been incredibly successful in campaigns across Europe banded together to depose their head of state—and failed to advance further against the tottering enemy.

General Georg THOMAS, WHO WAS actually responsible for armament matters, was one of the most persistent figures here. He so openly planned the coup against HITLER that the Commander-in-Chief of the Army Walther VON BRAUCHITSCH, told him, completely unnerved, "If you continue to demand to meet me, I will have to put you under arrest." THOMAS, however, had no reason to fear for his personal freedom. As VON BRAUCHITSCH had previously signaled to him, the commander-in-chief of the army would keep quiet while the others acted. Among the generals now active in the conspiracy was Field Marshal Günther VON KLUGE. VON KLUGE had sent the conspirator Fabian VON SCHLABRENOORFF to the civilian co-conspirator VON HASSELL TO inquire whether there were any promises of peace from the Allies in the event of HITLER's fall. After this was denied, - VON KLUGE WAS passive, because according to him, otherwise any shoemaker's assistant could have overthrown the regime.

VON Bock's senior officers, however, were ready to take HITLER out anyway. <sup>1-3</sup> They planned their coup d'état for August 3, 1941, when the gravely ill HITLER announced that he was leaving his headquarters at Wolfsschanze to join VON BOCK AT Army HQ.



gruppe Mitte in Borrisov. HITLER saw it necessary to reassure his senior generals and get them to understand or, better yet, accept this strategy. He did not know or refused to recognize that his life was in danger. However, HITLER complicated the plans of the young officers who wanted to start the coup by re-timing his arrival several times.

VON TRESCKOW and VON SCHLABRENDORFF wanted to intercept their commander-in-chief as he drove from the airfield to headquarters. But when HITLER arrived at Borrisow early in the morning of August 4, 1941, he threw a wrench in the officers' plans. He would not use an Army Group car, but instead boarded a heavy Mercedes G-4 staff car from his own motorcade, which he had sent ahead. The conspirators now did not know which of the similar-looking vehicles HITLER WAS IN, and reportedly did not get close enough to shoot during the 4 km drive to headquarters. The rest was done by HITLER'S 55 bodyguard, which - had also accompanied HITLER on his public rides in the pre-war period.

HITLER now dealt with his insubordinate commanders. He questioned each of them individually: VON BOCK, GUERIAN, HOTH, and the representative of HALDER, THE chief of staff, Adolf HEUSINGER. - Thus the generals could never form a united front; their discussions with HITLER showed that they were rather at odds among themselves.

They were then asked by HITLER to attend a conference at which he indicated that his present objectives would be Leningrad and probably Ukraine. The commanders left the conference submissive, but not defeated.

The long delay of the Eastern campaign in August 1941 also had something to do with the planned coup d'état. The photo shows a Daimler-Benz G4 >Partisan Car< with two MG34 of the Fuehrer escort column. Did these vehicles pose too great a danger to the VON TRESCKOW planned assassination near Borrisow on - August 3, 1941?

After the meeting with VON BOCK and GUDERIAN, HITLER even spoke briefly with VON TRECKOW about the final victory. Even now, VON TRECKOW DID not seize the opportunity for assassination that presented itself to him.

In the afternoon HITLER flew to Rastenburg to his headquarters>Wolfsschanze<. But even after the conference, which had not even ended unfavorably for HITLER, Chief of General Staff HALDER and the other generals continued to stonewall. HALDER wrote in his diary that the plans of the OKH (Army High Command) for Moscow were still the same. More days passed idly, which the Russians were able to take advantage of. GUDERIAN and VON BOCK tried to keep the possible Moscow offensive alive by keeping Roslavl and Yelnya open as a prelude to an attack along the highway to Moscow.

HITLER had now clearly had enough. On August 18, 1941, he issued Directive 34 in an attempt to end indecision and recalcitrance of his senior commanders. According to the new directive, the main German thrust was now to be directed south. Kiev, the Ukraine rich in raw materials, and the Caucasus were to be reached.

His generals continued to act idly. VON BOCK decided that GUDERIAN should now take upon himself the task of changing the Führer's mind. On August 23, 1941, GUDERIAN and HALDER took off in a Ju-52 to make this attempt. HITLER listened patiently to GUDERIAN, then returned to his opinion of the southern thrust. Now GUDERIAN changed sides. He agreed to turn his tanks south, but asked to be allowed to take his entire corps with him. In this way he ensured that VON BOCK could no longer hope to advance with Army Group Center. '1'

Some members of VON BOCK's command, like VON TRESCOW, never forgave GUDERIAN for this thrust in the back. Now came the great Kesselschlacht of Kiev. VON KLEIST's tanks (Army Group South) rushed north to meet GUDERIAN's tanks (Army Group Center) second major encirclement battle took place near, in an area the size of Hamburg-Cologne-Frankfurt

Five Soviet armies were encircled and 700,000 prisoners were After that, the southern tank army turned south again and finally pushed through the Donets Basin to the Sea of Azov.

The problem, however, was that the objective of the Kiev Kesselschlacht could only be to win freedom of rear for the further advance to the southeast. The victory was of use to the German Wehrmacht even if the tank units withdrawn from Army Group Center remained with Army

Group South. If they returned to the Moscow Front, the victory at Kiev was only an unnecessary loss of time. But this was exactly what the General Staff and the commanders of Army Group Center insisted on. Transporting them back and again wasted time, combat power and fuel. All this was no longer in accordance with the >Blitzkrieg< principle! Nevertheless, the Germans made good progress in the south towards Kharkov, threatened two Soviet armies in the rear at the lower Dnieper and took another 100,000 prisoners.

VON KLEIST's tanks then advanced to Rostov-on-Don, which had great strategic importance as the gateway to the Caucasus. Here, before Rostov, the German troops were already able to tap oil from a pipeline that was still fully operational coming from the Caucasus.

But then the German advance stalled at Rostov, and the troops had to retreat. The German forces were not sufficient. The two tank groups from the central front were missing. In addition, almost the entire Luftwaffe was deployed in the east in front of Moscow.

Paradoxically, when the offensive in front of Moscow actually took place, it was later withdrawn from there because it was supposedly "too strong". Questions arise!

The offensive had also begun too late in the south, as the muddy period began on October 20, 1941. Without the disputes with the General Staff, HITLER would have had better weather for the advance six weeks earlier. The unfinished victory on the southern front kept the Turks and the strong Japanese from entering the war. STALIN was thus able to move Siberian units from the Far East to the Southern Front as early as October 1941.

But one thing had facilitated the German southward swing. German traitors had told STALIN that the goal of the German offensive remained Moscow and that the wing operations were only diversionary tactics. This was radioed by the spy RADO to headquarters in Moscow on July 2, 1941, as a very urgent message. After all, the agent's message coincided with the official general planning of the Barbarossa Plan. HITLER's generals actually wanted to act in accordance with the knowledge of the enemy's spy service - wanted to do what had long been betrayed and walk into a trap before Moscow. The enemy was waiting for it, his agents had confirmed to him what was coming - but they la-

## 500 FINLAND

Frontiers of the German armies" group - Stalin  
line Front course, June 21, 1941 Front course,  
July 9]-  
Front course, September 1 Front course,  
September 30 -eptember-  
shattered kettle" Soviet counterattacks<

r "u 0  
Western Front

Map from: H. Günther Dahms, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Text und Bild*, Herbig, Munich '1995.

s wrong after all. In fact, Colonel Oleg GORDIEVSKY, a former senior Soviet KGB man who had access to KGB files for 23 years, confirmed that the Soviet military intelligence GRU had been surprised by the sudden southward movement of German troops (Kiev!). Preparation and attack there had completely escaped Soviet intelligence

This means that the traitor at the Führer's headquarters did not learn the outcome of the quarrels between HITLER and the generals in time.

HITLER, however, did not follow through with his strategy. In July/August 1941, this was probably the result of his illness. Why he - gave in after all in September/October 1941 for the enterprise >Taifun<, the conquest of Moscow, remains his secret. Was he just tired of the debates, did his deep-rooted respect for the authority of German Wehrmacht generals prevail or had the die been cast because of the completed preparations? We probably never know

Only later was it realized that HITLER's military plan would have opened up the better prospect, for VON Bock's armies were still outside

Moscow when winter set in. "I am also of the opinion today," Hermann GÖRING said later in Allied interrogation, "that without this watering down of HITLER'S original ingenious plan, the Eastern campaign would have been decided by the spring of 1942 at the latest." This is also confirmed by HITLER'S closest military confidant, Field Marshal Wilhelm KEITEL. In 1946, a few months before his execution, Wilhelm KEITEL - recalled that HITLER HAD considered his actual operational plan, kept secret until the very end and secured against betrayal, to defeat the Soviets on the sea coasts as the only possible strategy in the Russian area.

However, as he himself stated in retrospect in 1945, the Führer became the "victim of his generals". He gave a similar hint to his architect GIESLER in December 1941:<sup>1</sup> "I had reckoned with the betrayal of X-day. Surprise could only lie - as in the French campaign, in the strategic course of our attack. This strategy was carefully considered. But my own sense and the one-track thinking of my generalship thwarted the strategic planning. In the month of August, which was so important for the decision of the Barbarossa operation, I was weakened by illness that I could not muster the necessary perseverance and steadfastness against my generals to carry through my planning. Twice I thought I was close to victory - I was wrong, and I was deceived!"

In fact, Germany's southern operation in the east could have been carried out in time and with the appropriate military concentration before the onset of winter. Field Marshal VON RUNDSTEDT - also thought in the postwar period that he would have had a favorable opportunity to take the Western Caucasus in 1941 had he not been deprived of the fast divisions for Moscow.

However, it is a false statement to see HITLER and his generals only as opposites. Some of them were involved in the creation and implementation of the original plan.

In fact, the Russians, in the certain expectation of a German attack, had incredibly increased their military preparations in front of Moscow. STAVKIN withdrew two armies from the southwestern front in Ukraine and subordinated them to the front in front of Moscow. When GUDERIAN swung his tanks out to Kiev, Moscow at first enthusiastically saw it as a move of the German Moscow strategy. They believed that the enemy was gathering forces, needed to mobilize reserves, bring in replacements and reinforcements, and were glad to still have time to complete the defensive system in front of Moscow. They considered the weeks of German hesitation to be the calm before

the storm. The superiority of the Soviets in front of their capital was monstrous. By the end of September 1941, STAUN had assembled there 40% of his soldier strength, 35% of his tanks, 44% of all guns, 32% of all aircraft, and a total of 8 armies with 100 divisions.

therefore questionable why the target of the general should necessarily be Moscow and what would have happened if the German army had attacked Moscow in the summer of 1941. From today's point of view, it is assumed that in this case it would have been fighting before Moscow similar to that at Kursk in 1943, that time the Germans met the main force of the Russian tank armies, which was ready for defense. The result was incredibly high losses and no clear victory of either side. It would also have been possible to switch to a war of position, similar to the First World War.

The war would thus have taken on a completely new character as early as August 1941, and it would probably have been precisely the military setback the senior officers of Army Group Center were so desperately waiting for.

### **Speed is Trump: Is there a connection between the Kiev Kettle Battle and treason?**

In the battles for Smolensk, German treachery had repeatedly bought the Russians time to unhinge HITLER'S blitzkrieg concept.

But there was also an impressive case where the Russians got into dire straits as a result of German treachery.<sup>1</sup> This fact, already touched upon in the previous chapter, deserves a closer look. According to it, on August **10, 1941**, a German traitor had communicated to the Soviet agent >Lucy< in Switzerland the details of the attack plan of Field Marshal VON BOCK's army group for the most part: "Immediate objective: Moscow." This was nothing else than the order No. **34** of the High Command of the Wehrmacht of the same date!

The Soviet agent >Rado< immediately made the forwarding to the >Director< in Moscow. Immediately the Russian leadership made its appropriate decisions. STAUN SENT FOR the tank specialist General JEREMENKO and ordered him already two days later to fortify the section in front of Moscow and to expect the German tank general GUOERIAN there.

However, quarrels between the German General Staff and HITLER delayed the German attack. On August **18, 1941**, Chief of the General Staff HALDER suggested to HITLER that the attack on Moscow not be carried out frontally, but via Bryansk. In doing so, General GUOERIAN was to create the appearance among the Russians of turning g^^ to the south, only to

suddenly turn north and advance from Bryansk to Moscow. The >Director< in Moscow immediately learned of this change in Instruction No. **34**. As early as **24 August 1941**, Russian Chief of General Staff Sc^osCHNiKOW told General JEREMENKO that the attack on Bryansk was to take place the next day. Therefore, JEREMENKO pulled together the most important part of his forces there to parry the German blow coming from the west, exactly as the Russian General Staff had ordered him to do.

On August **21, 1941**, however, HITLER decided, and without notifying - Chief of Staff HALDER, THAT GUOERIAN's second panzer group should attack neither B:rjansk nor Moscow, but turn more to the south with Kiev as its objective, allowing GUOERIAN great freedom of maneuver.Of this, >Lucy< did not learn in time and, accordingly, neither did Moscow

Thus, the Russians were deceived on a large scale and about 15 Soviet armies were destroyed in this way. Also most important agricultural and industrial areas were lost. Completely surprisedthe German preparations and sudden attack, one of the greatest defeats in history occurred when the Kiev Kettle Battle was foughtresult was **66500** captured Red Army soldiers, 884 captured tanks and 3178 cannons.

In a fit of panic that same day, STAUN demanded that England'shead of state, CHURCHILL, SEND **20** to **25** divisions "to disembark at Arkhangelsk."

So even high-level betrayal could be fatal if it was overtaken by the facts. At the same time, this shows the direction from where the fast effective betrayal of German plans and intentionsmay have started Speed was trump!

The fast timely transmission must have been based on direct circuits to the enemy. Even if not all veils about the mystery >Wörther< have been lifted yet, it seems to be clear on the basis of declassified US documents of the seventies that >Wörther< did not sit in the Führer's headquarters or in the OKW, but was at the top of the German defense. ' According to the American findings, it must be taken for that direct connectionswere made from Berlin to the various Fuehrer headquarters on the one hand and to Switzerland on the other.

Not only did secure fe^unelde lines from Berlin convergeBern, but a courier service between the traitors in Berlin and the German consulate in Zurich was also established

Thus, on the one hand, both the Swiss intelligence service, which had the closest connections to the >Rote Kapelle<, and the British and American secret services were able to learn important German secrets.

e victory message \on the Kiev cauldron battle.

A special role was played by Hans Bernd GISEVIUS, who, as vice-consul in Bern, not only had access but also time to forward all courier messages arriving in Zurich from General OSTER to himself and on. For urgent messages, OSTER or one of his men could take a defense telephone unmolested. How the Abwehr were protected against interception by the Gestapo and the SD unknown. That they were so shielded, however, is evidenced by the unimpeded use of the telephones by the traitors and the survival of the group until at least July 20, 1944. This, too, explains the speed with which important messages were transmitted to the Soviets.

According to GISEVIUS, OSTER had formed a circle around himself and used the powers of the Abwehr so prudently that he was able to establish a g^e network of trusted agents. One of his most significant activities for the German defeat was to get his own trusted agents wide variety of positions. According to ^ne- rican communications, OSTER stood in a close conspiratorial relationship to:

General Ludwig BECK,

General Georg THOMAS (Chief of the Economy and Armaments Department at the OKW),

General Fritz THIELE and General Erich FELLGIEBEL (Chief of Army and Wehrmacht Intelligence),

General Friedrich OLBRIGHT (Chief of the General Army Office).

now clear how the alleged acts of treason and sabotage were interlocked in a cogwheel fashion. The pattern of this betrayal will have to be further explained in a future publication.

The "Banned Conquest" of Leningrad

On September 24, 1941, HITLER issued a secret order calling off the German attack on Leningrad. Capture of the white city on the Neva River would have been only a matter of days at that time.

This abort of the attack and the associated withdrawal of Panzer Group 4 with the fast divisions of the 41st Panzer Corps are today regarded as a wrong decision of just as far-reaching a nature as HITLER's halt order before Dunkirk. Now the Führer missed the decisive and probable success on the northern wing of the Eastern Front before Leningrad in a similar way as in 1940 in the West. Instead of a final victory with the destruction of 24 Russian divisions as well as 300,000 prisoners and the domination of the Baltic Sea as the "German inland sea", an energy-consuming battle of 900 days followed. It pinned down an entire army as a sentinel in front of a single city and, after terrible

Hans Bernd GISEVIUS. - The former Gestapo official became an important liaison to the U.S. Secret Service in Switzerland as a member of the Abwehr and as vice consul in Bern. From: Michael MÜLLER, - Canans Berlin 2006.



losses (keyword "Volkhov battles") ended with a German defeat in 1944.<sup>15</sup>

The capture of Leningrad could have taken place several times before September 1941 if it had not been forbidden each time. Researchers today are conspicuously silent about this.

HITLER's deployment order for the "Barbarossa case" stated that after the crushing of the enemy forces in White Russia by Army Group Center, strong parts of the German fast troops were to turn northward in order to destroy the Russian troops standing in the Baltic in cooperation with Army Group North. After completing this task, the occupation of Leningrad was to follow. Only after the conquest of Leningrad would the attack on Moscow follow.

Failure to comply with this plan was one of the causes of the winter disaster off Moscow - and it did not come by chance.

Leningrad was an important military, economic and political target only about 750 km from the German border, and only 150 km from the Finnish border, Leningrad's urban area could be isolated naturally.

The planned German advance from East Prussia did not present too many difficulties. The Wehrmacht only had to get across the D  na quickly enough, northwest into the Opochka area, and prevent the Russians from disengaging to the east.

The supply situation of Army Group North promised to remain stable for

tem to be better than on the rest of the Eastern Front. The terrain in the Baltic was similar to that in East Prussia, which was familiar to the Germans. It was flat and only occasionally hilly. Serviceable roads were sufficient to penetrate the country. The terrain itself was easily negotiable for motor vehicles. Only east of Lake Peipus was the area more wooded and rough.

The railroad network in the Leningrad area was even more favorable to the conquerors than the road network. More densely than in central or southern Russia, the railroad lines ran from the larger port cities into the interior.

Also, an efficient highway (land and transport road) ran from the well-developed German roads of the Lübeck, Stettin and Königsberg area directly to Reval in the Baltic and Leningrad. It looked as if briskly rolling supplies would become the key to German victory. In addition to road and rail ver-

German machine gun  
crew in the trenches  
outside Leningrad

the waterway across the Baltic Sea also spoke further security. The Germans then quickly succeeded winning the battle Leningrad apron

By July 15, 1941, the lower Luga had been conquered in incredibly daring maneuvers. Thus a springboard had been created 150 ahead of Leningrad for the favorable final attack. In two extended bridgeheads the German army was ready to storm. The Russians had been completely surprised by this operation and initially had no forces to be taken seriously in front of the new German front. Army Group North was not only able to beat off all provisional counterattacks by the Russians, but also to expand its initial positions and extend its supply routes. Everything was just waiting for the order to continue the attack. Leningrad lay unprotected two days march ahead of the German troops. The order to attack did not come!

Now the same tragedy repeated itself on the northern front in front of Leningrad as had already happened with Army Group Center after the quick conquest of Smolensk: The High Command of the Wehrmacht held HOEPNER's tanks in the Luga bridgeheads for three weeks.

It is still disputed today why this opportunity was not exploited. Unclear machinations thus prevented the quick and probably successful thrust on defenseless Leningrad.

Instead, a disastrous tug-of-war began that lasted week after week. Russians used this time to throw everything that could be pulled together front of General REINHARDT's Luga bridgeheads. Besides

heavy tank units with KW 1 and KW 2 also factory brigades of women and volunteers from higher school classes.

Thus, the unique opportunity for the Germans to take Leningrad in one swift attack from the west was lost

Colonel General REINHARDT later stated bitterly: "It was clear that a continuation of the attack could not be thought of immediately. First, the road network had to be improved for supplies and for following up hoped-for reinforcements. This required several days." Several days, but not three weeks! REINHARDT continued, "I^uner again urged the corps on early arrival and the hoped-for rapid Zu^inrung of at least parts of Korps MANSTEIN, which was barely making headway, but to no avail."

After General REINHARDT had already waited two weeks and had long been ready to attack, he was close to despair: "New postponement. Horrible! Opportunity we offered is definitely missed, it becomes harder and harder like this."

REINHARDT'S forbidden attack on Leningrad was not the last chance the Germans had. General VON MANSTEIN had orders to take Novgorod and then to grab the important Chudovo junction to cut offroads and railroad connections from Leningrad to Moscow.

MANSTEIN'S troops, however, were then used in an incomprehensible manner against the strong enemy fortifications in the area before Luga. His attack was also jeopardized by strange ordered weakenings. Thus the SS division >Totenkopf< remained at Lake Ilmen, and several armored divisions even had to hunt partisans in the rear area! On August 8, 1941, MANSTEIN had attacked, but where three weeks before only weak Soviet field guards had stood, now reinforced Soviet divisions lay in well-developed field positions. Nevertheless, by August 14, even this enemy was defeated. The road to Leningrad seemed clear once again. Above all, the more favorable open terrain behind the swamp forests had been gained. The last natural obstacle in front of the Baltic metropolis had been broken.

By mid-August 1941, however, parts of Panzer Group IV had been - taken away from VON MANSTEIN'S PANZER Corps because of the crisis at Staraya Russa. Therefore, General HOEPNER WAS forced to slow down again his successfully launched attack on Leningrad. It is difficult to understand that supplies were also missing again. By August 21, in spite of everything, the front groups of Panzer Group 4 managed to advance into Area 40 in front of Leningrad. In order to secure the final attack, the 18th Army under Colonel General KÜCHLER, withdrawn from Estonia,

was now to be moved to the Luga front in order to free up the fast armored units for the final attack on Leningrad. However, the 18th Army then needed eleven full days to cover the distance from Merva to Opolje, about 40 km as the crow flies. This prevented Colonel General HOEPNER from taking Leningrad in a hand-to-hand coup as early as the second half of August.

In addition to unclear supply difficulties, military experts such as General Charles BEAULIEU BLAME Field Marshal Ritter VON LEEB for these missed opportunities. In addition to VON LEEB, Chief of Staff General HALDER also played a curious role in the failure to take Leningrad. Although HITLER attached the greatest importance to the advantage of a rapid clearing of the entire northern area, HALDER was unwilling to recognize this opportunity. Leningrad fell and the link with the Finns was established, the sooner Army Group North could join the drive toward the southeast in support of the attack on Moscow. Thus HALDER continued to be stingy in releasing available reserves that could have secured a major victory at Leningrad. An unbelievable omission!

The reserves were available, as were two divisions brought in from the west. HALDER, however, had not made them available until the end of September. Again, 7 to 10 days had been lost unnecessarily. This also puts the long time taken by the 18th Army for its redeployment under a strange light.

Although now the forces necessary to overcome the defense of Leningrad had to be larger and larger, the final attack on the city on the Newa could be launched in early September 1941. On September 8 and 9, 1941, the starting shot was fired for the big attack. Soviets had already reckoned that they would not be able to hold Leningrad. Even the fanatical defender of Leningrad, ZHDANOV, was already toying with the idea of evacuating the city.

German tanks then succeeded in breaking through first and strongest outer defensive position near Oranienbaum, about 25 km west of the city, and also the last and second defensive position between Magischkino and Petro Dworez on the Oranienbaumer Chaussee. But now the German tanks had to stop. They had run dry and were out of ammunition. So the top of the tanks had to hold out on the outskirts of Urizk and wait for supplies.

To everyone's astonishment, MANSTEIN'S Panzer Corps was then 17. September 1941 pulled out of the front. As a result, the infantry divisions were bogged down in front of the legendary heights of Pulkovo, where as early as 1919 in the Russian Civil War the White

regiments that were to recapture Soviet Leningrad had also become bogged down

The fact is that the fast German panzer troops in front of Leningrad felt pinned down from behind, not by the enemy.

Of course, the official work of the Military Historical Research Office (MGFA) of the German Armed Forces hastened to claim "that this is not tenable upon examination of the other prerequisites". Especially decades after the end of the war, what must not be must not be, in order to nip inconvenient questions in the bud.

The supply situation of Army Group North was also strange. Compared with the other army groups, the northern wing of the Wehrmacht was still relatively easy to supply. distance from the jump-off base in East Prussia to Leningrad was, as already mentioned only about 750 km. The relatively well-developed transportation system in the former Baltic states did another.

Nevertheless, there were quite "unexpected problems" on the supply routes. For example, although the German railroad troops had succeeded in making about 500 km of railroad line in the upper area usable again, only one train a day arrived at Dünaburg, which was home to the northern supply district, instead of the expected ten. Thus, the transfer point from German to Russian track rapidly developed into a seemingly insurmountable bottleneck in the entire supply system. Situation in Eylau and Schaulen was at times so unsatisfactory that train transshipment took up to 80 hours instead of the regular 3 hours. Entire trains were lost!

This led the Luftwaffe to have its trains secured by armed officer detachments. But neither Generalquartiermeister WAGNER nor the transport chief GERCKE wanted to take responsibility for the strange chaos. Although the Army Commander-in-Chief personally intervened in the supply chaos, the incomprehensible situation hardly improved until the end of July. Many excuses were used to justify the incredible failure. No consequences of a personnel nature were drawn.

Even the modern work of the Military Historical Research Office (MGFA) of the German Armed Forces admits that insufficient supplies contributed significantly to preventing the rapid capture of Leningrad - classified by HITLER, after all, as one of the most important objectives of the campaign. Seven times, according to the MGFA, the attack on Leningrad had to be postponed for supply reasons, and even General HOEPNER's desperate proposal to attack the city of millions with a single armored corps failed because of WAGNER's veto, who allegedly felt unable to provide the

necessary supplies for this purpose.

Thus it is certain that, in addition to the various >prohibitions of attack< and reinforcements not sent in time, >supply difficulties< prevented the possible capture of Leningrad seven times

Then, when the German offensive resumed on August 8, 1941, it had to fight its way through against strong Russian defenses. Nevertheless, the German troops managed to break through once again before being bogged down again in September 1941 due to >lack of ammunition and fuel<.

After these oddities, which several times knocked the almost certain conquest of Leningrad out of the hands of the German Wehrmacht it is now necessary to look behind the motives that led to HITLER'S >Dünkir- chen in the East< on September 24.

### **Why Leningrad was not allowed to be taken in September 1941: The Tragedy of the Large Russian Radio Mine F-10.**

On July 12, 1941, a mysterious explosion occurred in Strugi Krasne, a town located far in the area of the German Army Group North behind the front line, in a building occupied by German troops of the LVI Panzer Corps (General VON MANSTEIN). Several senior officers and soldiers were killed. The investigating commission could explain this incident only by accidental blowing up of the presumed basement-stored Soviet prey ammunition. However, what was filed as a "not uncommon accident" was in fact the first combat operation in wartime history involving a remotely detonated explosive charge.<sup>1</sup> Russian sappers of a special unit of the Army Group Northern Front had laid three remote detonation charges of 250 kg - each during the clearing of the town of Strugi Krasne a week before the German occupation, which could be detonated with the latest, strictly directed F-10 radio equipment. Thereafter, inexplicable mine explosions also occurred at other places, especially large cities that were already far in the German rear, in which important buildings were completely destroyed - usually always at the moment when the building was occupied by senior German officers. After the occupation of Kiev by the Wehrmacht, the Russians had blown up entire apartment blocks by remote detonation, completely burning out the main street. A cousin of the famous rocket designer Wernher VON BRAUN, General Georg von BRAUN, commander of the 68th I.D., and other officers also fell victim to such a fe<sup>^</sup>uction large mine in Kharkov. It was the quarters where the later head of state KHRUSHCHEV had lived as a war councillor before the abandonment of the city. With his permission, the

fe^rnmine had been installed while he was still there

We know today that such extraordinary combat actions made a great impression on HITLER and he was inclined to overestimate them. HITLER compared these actions with the fire of Moscow, which caused NAPOLEON'S catastrophe in Russia. Of course, he wanted to avoid this danger for Germany.

Eventually it was discovered that this was no accident, but a treacherous new weapon that could not be disarmed by normal means. Technically, the F-10 was a total surprise. At first, it was suspected that the device came from America.

internal Russian designation of the large mines detonated by radio remote control was the F-10 device. 25-kg wooden boxes filled with small explosive bags were connected in the foundations of the houses in at least three places, secured against removal. Search fuses. In the case of loads in bags, the detonator was hidden in the breech. Such an F-10 could contain up to 1000 kg. The heart of the new weapon was an 8-tube radio receiver with a built-in electric timer for minimum power consumption and a 12-volt battery for power storage. The whole thing was packed in a waterproof rubber bag, which was also secured against removal by a train safety device.

To receive the firing signal, a 20 to 30 m long wire antenna was laid completely under the pavement, in the building under plaster or tiles. This antenna was always the indication of the remotely controlled large-scale mine.

Waterproof rubber bag with five ignition wires and already removed radio receiver (left) and battery with power cable (right). Bag closure with pull igniter additionally secured.

Russian 8-tube radio receiver for remote mine detonation over several hundred kilometers. Both illustrations from: Horst RIEBENSTAHL, *Deutsche*



To keep the F-10 unit ready to receive for at least three months, the electric clock switched the radio receiver to receive for about 8 seconds every three minutes. Each receiver was tuned to a specific tone length and pitch with the tuning fork for separate ignition. The igniter remained operational for about three months. The antenna of the device, which operated on a long-wave radio signal, always pointed to the remotely controlled large mine. When excavating, this was immediately shortened piece by piece, thereby weakening the reception of the ignition signal. More often, indications of the antenna came, including from the frightened civilian population, which had not been unaware of the construction activity. F-10 caused great losses especially among the officers of the German Wehrmacht, and according to the he

After the first known incidents, the search for hidden explosive charges in occupied buildings began with the greatest zeal. The discovery of an antenna was likely to cause panic among the

areas in question.

The charge was triggered with a tone-modeled signal on long-wave frequencies after a nearby Soviet civilian population, but also among the German soldiers who were sheltering in the buildings.

A tactical radio agent had reported the occupancy of the building to his command post. It proved problematic, on the German side, to turn off the tone modeled signal sequences in the 200 to 1200 kilohertz (KHZ) range because the tone triggering frequencies and tone sequences varied in order not to trigger the charge prematurely by own signals and at the same time to prevent the triggering by the Soviet side (in one case by Nikita KHRUSHCHEV, see below, in person), only the timely removal or the attempt with jamming transmitters remained.

The F-10 radio mine was also one of the main reasons why HITLER DID - not allow German troops to occupy Leningrad, but only to besiege it, and in the event of the hoped-for capture of Moscow, forbade German troops to enter the Soviet capital.

HITLER had received precise information, especially from the Finnish secret service about Soviet preparations for the systematic remote blasting of Lenin

In fact, however, the F-10 would not have had to possess a scare for the Germans!

Thus, certain senior German officers had long been aware of Soviet preparations to use the F-10 through communications from the Finnish side. For "reasons of secrecy," however, they refrained from notifying radio degree reported. Since no antidote was available against this sinister weapon of destruction, the abandonment of the easily possible capture of Leningrad on September 24, 1941, was only logical. A capture of the city would have been only a matter of days. Thus, however, an entire German army had to remain as a sentry in front of a single city prepared for the blowing up of all important buildings, bridges, underpasses and railroad stations. HITLER'S halting order before Leningrad is so often compared in its effects with that wrong decision of stopping the German tanks before Dunkirk in May 1940, which saved the English army.

Train fuses have already been defused, 25 kg explosive boxes are defused here, under a large public building. From: Horst RIEBENSTAHL, *Deutsche Pioniere im Einsatz*, Dörfner-Nebel, Utting 2001.

reconnaissance at the front of the threat. '.

Later, neither the radio frequencies known to the senior German officers nor the German tone generators developed in the meantime in response were passed on to the front-line troops. Nor were any other conclusions drawn at higher levels from the appearance of Soviet special radio traffic to trigger such charges. The suggestion that fixed radio reconnaissance units be assigned the task of detecting such radio traffic was followed as little as possible. This curious omission affected strategic decisions of the top German leadership in addition to great losses.

Later its salvage one of the F-10 femuzers in undamaged condition. A special unit of the German Pioneer Force was now established in the fall of 1941 at the Pionier-Wehrbataillon z.b.V. in Höxter/ Weser. This small special force was divided into three platoons of one officer, four noncommissioned officers and 40 men, and was deployed to Army Group North, Army Group South and Stalingrad.

When the German Wehrmacht only went backwards on the Eastern Front from 1943 on, the F-10 lost its importance.

The meanwhile thoroughly studied Soviet infernal machine had not been forgotten. SS-Obersturmbannführer SKORZENY took the Wehrmacht's painful experience with the F-10 as an opportunity to envisage the use of similar weapons by the Germans in the defense against the Allied invasion of France in 1944.

The radio mines were to be detonated not only by radio signal but also by aircraft. This is an indication that the F-10 had been further developed on the German side. The Western Allies were lucky that high German officers at Army Group ROMMEL, WHO WERE well-disposed towards them, forbade the use of the radio mine for flimsy reasons.

### **The Programmed Setback-**

#### **Was Hitler's Original Plan for the Eastern Campaign Sabotaged?**

Moscow, Leningrad and Rostov - the strange generals' quarrel and Himmler's illness of summer 1941 cost the German Reich more than just these three cities.

HITLER'S original plan for the eastern campaign was turned upside down. HITLER told his architect Hermann GIESLER in December 1941: - "The orders for the course of strategic-tactical operations were to result from the battle situation; they were dependent on the factors of >space<, >time<, >weather< and, above all, on the enemy forces. '1'.

Now to the strategic structure. The armies were divided into three

groups: North, Center and South. The main focus was on the >Heeresgruppe Mitte<, with the thrust on Moscow. This was an intended deception, because it was not about Moscow at all. Rather, enemy forces should face our offensive thrust, they should commit themselves and not evade. Then destroyed encirclement battles

me, the goal was not Moscow, but rather to encompass Leningrad establish a link with the Finns at Lake Ladoga, to eliminate Leningrad as an armament center, and to deprive the Russian fleet of its base at Kronstadt. The pacification of the Baltic Sea to secure supplies was of great importance.

Even more important was the thrust of the "Army Group South". Here the harvest of the fertile Ukraine, the wheat, the oil from the huge southern flower fields obtained for the troops and the people's food

The second north-south thrust out of the >Heeresgruppe Mitte< was aimed at raw materials, coal, iron ore, chrome and manganese and the important power plants in the area around the Dnieper and Donetz to Rostov and the Black Sea. There, directly next to the raw materials, were the industrial centers, the agglomerations of Russian armaments and economic power

At the same time, the starting point for the thrust to the Caucasus oil could be gained. At the same time, this would create the space that would secure the war-important oil supply from the Romanian area around Ploesti against surprise attacks.

That was to be the conclusion, if strength, time and space permitted."

According to Hans GIESLER's sketch from memory of HITLER's own drawing of his original eastern campaign strategy Army Group Center would have halted in front of Moscow, then swung out to the north and south. The Russian capital would have been bypassed from three sides afterwards. The so fatal final attack on Moscow from November 1941 was never foreseen in this plan.

In the fall of 1944, Adolf HITLER told GIESLER THAT the original strategy of the Russian campaign had been carefully planned and well thought out. In order to be able to conduct rapid encircling attacks, he had wanted to gain the large space necessary for this operation, but to keep it roughly on the line Peipussee-Smolensk-Orel-Odessa. Then the mobile and tank units detached from the strong >Heeresgruppe Mitte< and to swing in to the right and left. The right to reinforce >Heeresgruppe Süd< take the Donets area and the oil fields of Krasnodar and Majkop.

To the left, to "Army Group North", with the goal of taking Leningrad, at

establish a connection with the Finns in order to keep the Baltic Sea free of enemy action.

Hunched over maps of Eastern Europe for nights on end, HITLER had worked out his original plan together with military officers unknown to this day.

For reasons of secrecy, he had inaugurated only a very small circle.

Lake Ladoga. Then Hitler told his generals the >true< goals of the campaign. Here GIESLER revealed THAT HITLER had been sure that the Russians knew in advance every

detail of the attack plan, down to the hour and day of the preemptive strike. It is interesting that thus not only the main objective of the attack remained unknown to his own generals - but also to STAUN.

After HITLER'S ILLNESS, his >wing strategy< was successfully undermined by the Army High Command. According to HITLER'S military adjutant VON P^^MER, VON BRAUCHITSCH and HALDER had deliberately thwarted HITLER'S plans behind his back during his illness.

In July 1941, the generals had reported to HITLER instead that the panzer divisions and fast units were completely exhausted, the tanks had to be overhauled, and they were not operational. HITLER said to GIESLER afterwards about this: "They told me the weeks needed for this. So they wanted to block the flank thrusts I had planned to the north, to Leningrad and the south, to the Ukraine and the Donez. I was sick and without willpower, weakened, I could not stand against the obstinacy and willfulness ... The time, which was favorable for mobile warfare, was running out, - the precious time, - it was always the time and too much space in this war!" HITLER remarked and continued: "One of the flanking and encircling thrusts to the south I was still able to push through after my recovery at the end of September. I literally had to wrest this operation from my generals- even had to force it with harsh orders. The result was: 4 Russian armies were crushed, there were over 650 000 prisoners. Even this success did not convince my generals of the only possible strategy in the Russian area. Against my inner conviction, they put the frontal attack on Moscow, I was not concerned with Moscow, but they could not or would not understand that. And it was too late for the implementation of the grand strategy. The attack on Moscow encountered an increasingly stiffening strong Russian defense and, the goal in mind, already our divisions tired and weakened by months of fighting with weapons against Siberian formations and ever new forces, freshly brought from the vastness of space."

The attack on Moscow came to a halt, as Hitler had foreseen, by the mass of Russian forces. And soon after the front froze in the snow and freezing cold

HITLER concluded: "What has become of it through obstinacy and know-it-all attitude! - Yes, some things bordered on insubordination and almost on sabotage!"

HerrLER's actual operational plan >Barbarossa< kept secret until the end and secured against betrayal to defeat the Soviets on the sea coasts within 4 to 5 months, remained unexecuted.

HerrLER's illness and recalcitrant officers rendered the political-warfare strategy moot in the summer of 1941

In the post-war period, Soviet generals also reported with what relief they had acknowledged Hitler's strategy, which had been watered down by leading German military officers

### **The real author of the faulty timing of the Eastern campaign**

In order to achieve the German objectives, it was necessary that the enemy resistance be essentially extinguished by August 1941. Only in this way could the gigantic and risky time schedule be adhered to, according to which the bulk of the Red Army was to be destroyed in a line west of the Dvina and Dnieper rivers and then reach Leningrad, Moscow and Rostov by mid-October. **in** a third phase, the German army was to be on a line Arkhangelsk-Gorky-Astrakhan by December 31, 1941 at the latest. In short, in 21 weeks, 3.5 million kilometers of terrain with 130 million inhabitants were to be conquered.

These plans, which were almost insane in terms of space, time and strength of the attacking army, were not the result of a megalomaniac planning by HerrLER, as is thought today.

In fact, it was Chief of Staff General HALDER WHO came forward at the end of July 1940 with the prediction that "the matter should be settled in 4 to 6 weeks". <sup>1</sup> HALDER also suggested to HerrLER that this attack be launched in the fall of 1940.

It took the intervention of his rivals in the OKW (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht), KEITEL and JOM, to make it clear that nothing was prepared to challenge a country known for its terrible weather in the fall and winter, and that it would be better to wait for the spring of 1941.

The whole thing seems even more reckless when one considers the limited forces of the German Wehrmacht **for** the Eastern campaign.

Again one must be surprised that this should not have been noticed by such an intelligent head as Pranz HALDER.

The Wehrmacht would have probably run into its immediate doom with a hasty start of the Eastern campaign in the fall of 1940!

## **The >Miracle< or: Was the Wehrmacht on the verge of success in the fall of 1941?**

HITLER's plan almost worked in spite of everything.

After June 22, 1941, the Wehrmacht had entered Russia on three major axes of attack within 150 days at varying speeds. By early December 1941, the Wehrmacht had extended eastward an average of between 800 and 1300 km, besieged Leningrad, and reached the suburbs of Moscow. In short term, it had succeeded in advancing as far as Rostov, the gateway to the Caucasus with its oil reserves and the route possibility to Iran and Iraq.

The German Wehrmacht had conquered a territory three times the size of France and comprising 33 to 50 percent of the industrial and agricultural potential of the Soviet Union. Industrial spoils were diminished by the successful eastward relocation of some of the factories.

Although it almost always knew the German attack plans in time, the Red Army had suffered incredible, almost astronomically high losses. According to official Soviet estimates, 398,770 soldiers had to be written on the casualty lists. However, according to estimates of the American historian Cynthia ROBERTS, the exact number is probably much higher and lies at 5 million dead, injured and missing soldiers.

The quantities of Russian material destroyed or captured were staggering: 101,000 guns and mortars, 20,500 tanks (89 percent of the June 1941 inventory), and 21,200 aircraft were lost. Never in military history had such quantitative results been achieved in such a short time. The Red Army had suffered losses in 1941 equal to its total strength originally assumed by Berlin. It seemed that the initial German optimism of the spring of 1941 that such an army could be defeated was not entirely unjustified.<sup>1-2</sup>

On October 10, 1941, HITLER had his >Victory in the East< announced in a highly official manner. The Reich Press Chief Otto DIETRICH was sent from the Fuehrer's headquarters to Berlin so that not only the German people but the whole world would know that Germany had won the Eastern campaign. On that day, the foreign press corps gathered in the richly decorated hall of the Propaganda Ministry in Berlin. There was a tense expectation, which was intensified by a long, probably artificially caused delay of the beginning.

A red velvet curtain was raised by Press Chief DIETRICH, revealing a vast map of the Soviet front. The last remnants of the Red Army, DIETRICH said, were sitting in a vise which was being tightened by the German troops day by day. There could be no doubt about their imminent destruction. Behind them stretched an unprotected expanse, and there the German armies would advance.



Trembling, neutral members of the press in the audience, like the Americans, listened to the words of the press chief. Journalists of the German allies rose and broke into shouts of triumph with outstretched right arms. The following day, newspapers in the German Reich spread the glad tidings: "Campaign in the East decided! The great hour has struck!"

The people of the German Reich could see their relief. Everyone, including the allies in Europe, enjoyed the exhilarating feeling of victory. The war in the East seemed to be about to end.

In Moscow, STALIN'S private train and his fleet of aircraft remained on constant standby to move the government to Kuibyshev. The Moscow population began to evacuate. Everything went on the journey to the East - from foreign embassies, archives, art treasures to the politically charged Russian officials. Even LENIN'S body was taken to safety.<sup>3-4</sup>

When Russian General ZHUKOV took command of the defense forces in front of the capital, he had only 90,000 soldiers standing between the Wehrmacht and Moscow. This was all that remained of 800,000 men who had gone into battle in September 1941.

For every German killed, 20 Soviet soldiers lost their lives. Despite the heat, rain and mud, the Germans had victoriously fought eight offensive battles of historic dimensions and not only on the battlefields of the Soviet Union but also in the air, the German fighters and bombers unrestrictedly dominated the skies.

Decision made! In  
October 1941 the world  
press on both  
sides announced the  
imminent, for the  
Germans victorious end  
of the Eastern  
campaign. Nothing more  
threatened to become  
of >setback< desired by  
traitor circles

Nevertheless, it is a fact that within a few weeks the German Eastern Army, so battle-hardened and confident of victory, failed terribly just before the final victory in the East. The Soviet counteroffensive before Moscow on December 6, 1941, then changed the situation from the ground

How can the prevention of the almost certain collapse of Red Army be explained? The reasons certainly not lie in the supposedly superior fighting morale of the Red Army, which in 1941 lost hundreds of thousands of soldiers to the Germans through desertion

To the chagrin of the official politics of history since 1945 factor that has been denied to this day that contributed significantly

to knock out of the Germans' hands their already seemingly certain success. In fact, the machinations of treachery and sabotage on the German side revealed here make it seem a miracle that the German soldiers got this far at all by the end of 1941.

following, therefore, the focus will not be on the course of the eastern campaign in 1941/42, but on the forces working in background. Even though they were small in

number and had no support from the fighting frontline troops, their positions at key points often enabled them to achieve decisive results for their goals.

also investigates reports that serious Soviet initiatives for a separate peace with Germany were repeatedly sabotaged by high-ranking German personalities

Second World War was probably the first major conflict in world history whose outcome was no longer decided on the ground by the land armies alone, but above all by air war therefore necessary to examine without blinkers why the German air force, as a decisive element of the >Blitzkrieg concept< alongside the Panzerwaffe unable to fulfill high expectations placed in it for >Unternehmen Barbarossa< beyond the turn of the year 1941/42 Here, too, a surprise is in store that is likely to drive many established historians to despair.

Although much remains locked away in archives of the victorious powers for political reasons, it nevertheless seems possible to fill a gap in research

## **6. Chapter**

**Not only the weather was to blame or:  
Where were the supplies?**

**Unbelievable incidents and >sloppiness< explain  
many of the Wehrmacht's difficulties in the East**

## Why were German tank reserves not released for the Eastern Front summer of 1941?

The German Eastern Army was not only inadequately armed and equipped as a result of the failures of the German Army Headquarters, but HITLER also failed in the summer of

**1941**, in part, the replenishment of the lost material. The result was a drop in combat power at the very time when it was necessary to secure the widening space.

The tank failures were naturally most severe in General GUDERIAN's most heavily used Panzer Group II.

Here, on September **15, 1941**, four armored divisions had only between **20** and **30** percent of their already low target inventory of armored vehicles. Panzer Regiment **6** of the Third Armored Division had only **10** tanks at the end of September **1941**.

Here, in what is now seen as a major mistake, HITLER had for a long time refused to release the newly manufactured tanks from the homeland for the Eastern Front. Instead, he held them back for planned re-deployments. Among them were four armored divisions to be used for long-range operations following the victorious Eastern campaign. As early as July **13, 1941**, the Führer had ordered that the armored units deployed in the east up to that time suffice for the further course of the campaign. Replenishment of tanks in case of total failure released only the small extent authorized by him.

On August **4, 1941**, HITLER repeated his reasons for withholding the newly manufactured tanks: he wanted to create tank reserves in view of possible landings by British troops on the Atlantic front (!).

HITLER commented that the Russian enemy had already been driven into the river, that it would not be able to conduct large-scale operations in the future. In the end, however, HITLER did release **300** tank engines, **70 Panzer** IIIs, **15 Panzer** IVs and an undisclosed number of Panzer **38** (t). Then, in September **1941**, another **150 Panzer** IIIs, **60 Panzer 38s** (t), and **96** Panzer IVs were released.

This was not even enough to replace the tank losses, and since the reserves were released at such a late date, many of the tanks sent from the west did not even reach the troops. It was reported, for example, that of the **100** tanks scheduled for Panzer Group II, only **50** actually arrived at their destination. We will deal with this >disappearance< of supplies

3Admiral CANARIS' defenses were responsible for these misreportings.

elsewhere

seems equally senseless that the Second Armored Division, which had been held in reserve by the OKH until then was put on the march to France on August 10, 1941

question therefore arises as to what prompted Hm.ER to make this overoptimistic assessment of the situation in the east, so that the Wehrmacht did not receive all the armored vehicles actually available during the decisive days of the eastern campaign

The fact is that HITLER and the Army High Command acted on the basis of an assessment of the situation by the General Staff's >Foreign Armies East< Division which was submitted on July 17, 1941. It stated that Russia had a total of only about **50** infantry and 8 armored divisions, and that on the German side the forces of the decisive "Heeresgruppe Mitte" (Army Group Center) in particular were estimated to be extremely low.

How erroneous these statements of the department "Fremde Heere Ost" were in reality and what disastrous consequences they would show was soon to become apparent.

In fact, on August 1, 1941, the Red Army had over 36 rifle divisions, 11 tank, and 2 mechanized divisions available on the Central Front alone. The Foreign Armies East Division< thus underestimated the enemy in front of the Central Front by almost half. The total Soviet forces deployed on the Eastern Front against Germany and her allies actually consisted of 269 divisions and 18 brigades on August 1, 1941. Among them were 46 armored divisions alone

In the end, it was gross miscalculations by the General Staff Division "Foreign Armies East" that led to the withholding of German tank supplies from the Eastern Front in the summer of 1941

### **Willfully helped along?**

#### **The conspicuously rapid decline of the truck replenishment business**

The need to make fast German armored divisions and motorized infantry divisions in the first phase of the eastern campaign independent of the Soviet railroad system, which had yet to be put into disarray, had led the German high command to rely more heavily than before on the use of motor vehicle columns to resupply

In the end, however, the number of motor vehicles - available to the Germans by June 1941 was not even sufficient to equip all divisions of the German Eastern Army with their motorized supply columns planned organization. Thus, 77 infantry divisions received only horse-drawn columns with an additional 200 Panzerwagen each.

Each army group received 20,000 tons of large transport space. This was understood to mean heavy trucks from civilian transport companies and the Reichsbahn. Trucks and their drivers were called forward into three motor transport regiments. There were no other reserves.

2000 different types of vehicles in service with the Wehrmacht 1941 promised from the outset a high demand on the supply system for spare parts and repairs<sup>1</sup>.

Already the first days of the Eastern campaign brought unpleasant surprises for the German truck troops.

Although the German Army High Command (OKH) had known beforehand that the Russian roads were in poor condition, they had not in the least expected difficulties on the scale that occurred after June 22, 1941. Incorrect road maps caused supplies to take no way withstand the strain of heavy truck traffic and were often destroyed after only a few days. Unpaved roads caused stuck vehicles and mechanical failures. In addition, there was a strange deployment procedure. The motorized German armored and infantry divisions quickly advanced to

Contrary to official statements, large parts of the Wehrmacht were not motorized. They therefore relied on horses to transport supplies - a nightmare for many, given the unpaved roads.

East and carried out the well-known boiler operations.

The great mass of German infantry divisions with their baggage. The number of transport crews, however, fell further and further

*Left:* Suitable for the road conditions in Russia. All-terrain Henschel 33 D1 trucks lined up in a barracks in France shortly before the eastward march in spring 1941. *Right:* Army supply with heavy Berliet trucks. Only with the help of French industry was Germany able to create enough truck space for Barbarossa at all. After a few weeks of operations, however, the stockpile of vehicles had thinned out considerably, not only because of poor road and spare parts conditions but also because of the frequent dangerous shuttling between fast tank spearheads and slow foot divisions of the large Army infantry mass (Source: Author)

Into these unsecured gaps between the motorized groups and the manned divisions, the empty heavy trucks of the armored spearheads moved back to the rear. This procedure, probably unique in the history of modern warfare, in which an important part of the supply vehicles followed the spearheads of the troops, thus running ahead of the mass of their own army instead of following in its shadow (and moving back in the opposite direction equally unsecured), inevitably claimed heavy victims among the valuable truck columns.

More than a third of the vehicles had thus been lost to Army Group Mitte alone by July 20, 1941.

It was strange that the well-equipped German repair facilities for the truck columns were not moved forward with them and remained far to the rear in the Generalgouvernement or even in the Reich territory even after the start of the campaign. Were they forgotten?

But instead of now generously replacing at least the shortfalls, the OKH refused further vehicle supplies with regard to the "tense situation in the truck sector and in view of the planned new deployments"! Again questions arise.



But not only that. On July 10, 1941, the OKH informed the various armies that no more spare tires at all would be allocated to the transport columns - another inexplicable blunder. This was considered an impertinence even then.

Thus it becomes clear that even in the first decisive phase of the campaign, when it was still hoped that the Soviet Union could be defeated in several weeks of blitzkrieg operations, avoidable systematic errors occurred in the OKH transport supplies on road

All this was bound to reduce the supply capacity for the fighting troops - even at a time when the inadequate preparation of the German vehicles for the Russian winter had not yet had any effect

The winter was then to lead to a new decimation of German motor vehicles on the Eastern Front. Probably hardly any of the trucks sent across the German-Russian demarcation line on July 22, 1941, ever returned to Germany or France. The situation with truck transport space had the following effects

the worse, as chaos also reigned during the ironmaking push in 1941/42.

### **Was the rail supply for >Barbarossa< systematically sabotaged?**

The lack of sufficient rail supplies had a devastating effect on the German war effort on the Eastern Front in 1941 / 42. In the first phase of the attack, which lasted until July 18, 1941, the operations of Army Groups >North< and >Center< proceeded according to expectations, while those of Army Group >South< were slower than hoped.

Work on repairing the destroyed Russian rail facilities began immediately. quickly became apparent, however, that the Soviets were largely able to repatriate vital parts of the plant, especially supply points and locomotive workshops, or rendered them unusable. Destruction and evacuation was facilitated by the fact that the army groups and armies not kept to the railroad lines during their advance despite instructions to the army command. It is striking here that the route maps issued by the Chief of Transportation, Wehrmacht General GERCKE, for the period from the beginning of the campaign to November 1941 are apparently no longer available.

The Russians had also managed to withdraw their own locomotives and railroad cars in time. The German air force had not managed to sustainably prevent the withdrawal of the rolling broad-gauge material

By the end of August 1941, only 1000 locomotives had been captured by the Germans, 500 of them operational and most of them still wood-fired, and 21000 freight cars<sup>1</sup> Thus, the necessity had arisen to start the gauge change from broad gauge to European standard gauge with all available forces, also by enlisting the population, and to repair blown-up bridges in particular with railroad pioneers. The first orders

for gauge change were issued by the Chief of Transportation between July 1 and 7, 1941.

Due to a lack of locomotives, almost all class 38, 55, 56, and 57 locomotives had to roll out of the Reich territory to the east. Almost none of them returned. They were replaced in the German territory and in the occupied territories by locomotives on loan from France and Belgium. Among them were many former German locomotives, from the Armistice levies of 1918, but American 1D locomotives from World War I also appeared in German stations. Because of these bottlenecks, even old dainty 19th-century Länderbahn locomotives with their much too small tenders appeared on the network in the occupied Russian East.<sup>2</sup>

In the first phase of operations, Army Group North had covered about 600 kilometers as the crow flies within 20 days, Army Group Center nearly 400 kilometers, and Army Group South stood about 400 kilometers from the demarcation line of June 22, 1941. According to the entries of Chief of Staff General HALDER, supplies by rail and large transport (truck) were generally satisfactory.

The transport situation, the Army General Staff believed at the time, would permit an advance of armored forces as far as Leningrad, as close as Moscow, and as far as Kiev. In his notes for the July 23 Führer lecture, Chief of Staff General HALDER stated, "In about a month (August 25) our troops can be assumed around Leningrad (about 80 km), around Moscow (300 km), in line Orel-Krim (about 400 km), in early October on the Volga (another 600 km), in early November around Baku (another 1200 km), Batumi."

If until then everything looked like normal problems of a campaign in a big country with bad traffic conditions, this should change soon. Again we come across the date end of July 1941, when also the Generalaufstand caused the German Blitzkrieg concept to suffer decisive delay.

By the end of July 1941, there were already considerable tensions in supply on all sections of the front, complaints from the troops, and trains being taken away from each other.

Now the so-called Handkoffer of supplies, which was allocated to the shock units by the OKH, was also used up. The Handkoffer consisted of 400-500 tons of transport space, which was incorporated into the fighting troops.<sup>1</sup> In order not to unnecessarily restrict the supplies of the Handkoffer, the army units had to leave their existing winter equipment behind beyond the borders.

Only the Luftwaffe and units of the SS refused to do so and took their winter gear anyway.

Doubters were told that there were >leader's orders< or that according to Hrr'LER's planning the Eastern campaign would be finished by winter >anyhow<. Others expected an >especially mild winter< in Russia this year!

The lack of supplies made itself ^^er worse felt at the front. Thus, Panzer Group 4 had to halt for lack of supplies from mid-July until about August 8, 1941, thus enabling the Russians to establish a new defensive line in front of Leningrad. Oddly enough, it was precisely >Heeresgruppe Nord< which was relatively easy to supply greatest difficulties the outset. As mentioned elsewhere, the transfer points from German to Russian broad gauge became the major bottleneck of the whole supply system. The transshipment took up to 80 hours instead of the regular three. Entire trains were lost the process- goodbye!

Only a small part of the route network was fully utilized. The >Heeresgruppe Nord<, which demanded a transport performance of 34 trains daily, could at best count on 18. Even this number was actually reached only in exceptional cases.

northern field office of the Deutsche Reichsbahn was able to point out that no unit had yet run into a real emergency, but the complaints from the troops were getting louder and louder.

Neither General Quartermaster WAGNER nor Transport Chief GERCKE

wanted to take responsibility for the chaos, and although the commander-in-chief of the army personally intervened, the situation hardly changed. Only the Luftwaffe used armed officer commandos to get its trains to their destination without interference.

Counteracting the failure of the Reichsbahn!>Schienenzepp<, ingenious improvisations with rail trucks, kept up a minimum of supplies for the 6th Army and Panzer Group 1. Mainly used were types >Magirus L 365< (in the picture) and Mercedes-Benz 4500<

Army Group South also quickly experienced supply chaos. Instead of the required 24 trains a day, VON R^UNDSTEDT received an average of 14.5 - at best. Often, trains arrived at their destination only half loaded.

From October 17, 1941, no supplies arrived at all, so the tank group had to use up its last supplies and live >out of the country<!

The 6th Army now made do by operating lines provisionally with a few captured Soviet freight cars pulled by rail trucks belonging to the army heavy motorized tractors whose rail wheelsets were adjustable for broad and standard gauge. Similar emergency solutions also enabled Panzer Group 1 to resume a minimal supply.

From the >normal< railroad, the running supplies for >Heeresgruppe Süd< could only be covered to one third, without bringing in supplies necessary for replenishment, especially fuel. In October 1941, instead of the expected 724 trains, only 195 arrived at the Dnieper base.

After the beginning of the frost period, the >Außenstelle Süd< of the Reichsbahn finally saw no possibility to supply the troops with the most necessary items

The fact that Panzer Group 1 reached Rostov at all in *this way* is an exceptional achievement, which was only possible with increasing wear and tear and inadequate repair of the existing vehicles. Here, too, the troops complained about massive organizational failures of the supply

organization. The >system< seemed to be equally bad everywhere! <sup>11</sup>

At the >Heeresgruppe Mitte< already during the fight in the Yelnya arc in July 1941 *there was* a severe ammunition crisis. Therefore, the area had to be evacuated by General GUDERMAN! - However, an investigation requested by HINRICHS (what a miracle!) could not find any culpable failure of the supply command. This shows that already at that time, even for outsiders, something seemed to be wrong here. However, since those responsible stuck together like everything came to nothing - and the game could go on, to the detriment of the Landser in the front lines

At the beginning of August 1941, >Heeresgruppe Mitte< was again plunged into a severe supply crisis. One of the demonstrable causes of the Russians' prolonged hold at Smolensk was the conspicuous lack of fuel and ammunition on the part of the Germans. Although the priority of ammunition supply in early August necessitated a drastic reduction in the use of operating material and rations, <urgently needed ammunition trains got >lost< in the Warsaw supply area and were not recovered until days later

Thus, as if by magic, the ammunition supplies of >Heeresgruppe Mitte< continued to fall instead of rising. For >Heeresgruppe Mitte<, 24 trains per day were necessary to maintain minimum requirements. In August, however, only between 8 and 15 arrived, in September 1941 only 12 supply trains, and this in good weather!

When the Army High Command wanted to initiate the decisive act of >Barbarossa< with the advance on Moscow ("Operation Typhoon"), >man< failed to concentrate entire remaining supply capacity here

Instead of this, even 5000 tons of large truck transport space was withdrawn from the planned offensive against Moscow at the end of August 1941 and made available to >Heeresgruppe Süd< to build up its supply depots (!).

The stockpile of ammunition accumulated before the offensive began did not even cover two weeks' consumption in the area of >Heeresgruppe Mitte<. supply of fuel trains was also considerably behind. Shortly before start of the attack available German supplies were barely sufficient for more than 300 km of distance, i.e. at most until shortly before the gates of Moscow.

It is unbelievable that Generalquartiermeister WAGNER nevertheless reported on the day before the attack that the supply for >Operation Typhoon< was "satisfactory" and that he was "ready to jump". There was probably more than stupidity involved here!

Thus, >Heeresgruppe Mitte< sent into the final battle against Moscow with an exhausted and decimated force, badly worn motor vehicles without sufficient and no hope of a smooth influx of supply trains. The first major successes of the attack could not then be exploited because of a shortage of operating supplies, which brought the movements to a temporary standstill. <sup>12</sup>

It was also grotesque that the troops were not provided with winter equipment. Here the >collapse< of the supply traffic had dramatic consequences

on the delivery of the actually available equipment

As shown elsewhere, the German High Command had had winter equipment made in time for at least 56 divisions, to which the SS and Luftwaffe were added. Another 255 trains full of prefabricated winter barracks and stoves were ready!

As of October, 371 trains lay between Berlin and Krakow containing winter accommodation material/equipment, motor vehicle winter equipment, sledges and, of course, clothing

Under the keyword >Bogen< everything was to be brought to the front. A large transport movement from October 22 to 30, 1941. However, the plan fell victim to the transport blockade of the railroad. Trains got stuck again (!) in the supply area of Warsaw and could only be inserted between operational trains with ammunition and fuel were supposedly running with priority

Thus, it was largely left to the initiative of the individual armies to request trains with winter equipment, if necessary at the expense of the ammunition supply. However, this then usually arrived just as little.

Even if the German winter clothing of that time should prove to not fully sufficient in relation to the requirements of the Russian winter, it was in fact still better than the normal uniforms with which the Landser had to exist before Moscow and Rostov in the winter 1941 / 42. The transport ban as well as the railroad jam in the area of Warsaw are to be regarded as unbelievable here. End



In 1941, the Reichsbahn had actually announced a transport blockade, due to which neither weapons nor equipment had reached the armored groups of the armies that had advanced to the east.

Thus, with minor exceptions, the supply of entire arsenals of weapons from the homeland remained suspended for about six weeks.

The reasons lay in the incredibly false assumption that the weapons of the divisions to be disbanded could be used to eliminate shortfalls in the other divisions to a considerable extent.

Since the replenishment of comprehensive weapons deliveries to the Eastern Front had not been carried out in November, the losses were also covered from the weapons parks of the *Heeresgruppen Nord* and *Mitte*, whose stocks had been completely replenished by December. A relaxation in the situation of *Heeresgruppe Mitte* occurred in early December 1941 with the arrival of a single equipment train at Smolensk. However, this equipment train had already been provided in October 1941! Another unbelievable transport failure.

In addition to the Reichsbahn, the Quartermaster General and the Chief of Transportation were involved in the organization and implementation of the resupply.

Cooperation of all those involved in the supply had been practiced before the start of the campaign. Incredible quarrels, sloppiness and chaos with method nevertheless prevailed everywhere. Insufficient coordination among those involved in ensuring operations was as much to blame as the system of the Quartermaster General, who appointed a field office indirectly subordinate to him at each Army Group. Their task was to direct the senior quartermaster staffs of the armies. In this way they were to remain independent of the troop commanders (!) and able to enforce emphasis on supply management. The decoupling of the army groups from the supply command thus enabled the quartermaster general to direct supply even if it ran counter to the armies' operational command.

The railroad was under the command of the chief of Wehrmacht transport, Lieutenant General Rudolf GERCKE. He was considered by his comrades to be one of the great failures of the war. However, as explained elsewhere, there may have been other motives behind this.

The Reichsbahn itself also made itself unpopular. Since many officers of the efficient field railroad force did not think much of the inherent laws and safety requirements of peacetime rail traffic, the railroad made sure that orders from the very top (WAGNER and GERCKE?) delimited the



responsibilities and the inscription >German Wehrmacht< disappeared again from the vehicles of the >German Reichsbahn Ost<.

The Reichsbahn attached great importance to service by the book. In this way, it was possible to effectively delay >with Method Langsam< without being able to arrest the high-ranking saboteurs. It was remarkable that even in the worst locomotive jams and supply stoppages >service trains< for internal needs of the Reichsbahn ran without problems. So one could - if one wanted to!

When the trains came to a complete standstill in the frost of winter 1941/42, the military and the railwaymen blamed each other. Nobody seemed to dare to use the word >sabotage< for the grievances.

When responsible freight train schedule supervisors at the Osten< plant management, e.g. the later Bundesbahn Vice President BRAND, raised the question of winter security of railroad operations, they were arrogantly told that the campaign would end at Christmas and that no special transport requirements were to be expected then.

In addition, strange incidents happened that brought mood of the frontline troops to a boil. While winter equipment was missing on the Eastern Front or even misdirected to France, someone sent two freight trains of bottled French red wine to Paris. Instead of the urgently needed ammunition and winter equipment, two trains of wine!

When the transport arrived at the 4th Army in Juchnow, it was minus 25 degrees. The unloading detachments could recover only large lumps of red ice mixed with broken glass. General Bw- MENTRIIT, then Chief of the General Staff of the 4th Army, said he had seldom seen the Landser so furious as in the face of this shield prank.

Frozen >mulled wine< before Moscow, fish meal and condoms later to Stalingrad, winter equipment for Africa - among the high masters of the supply organization there must have been a very special joker who took sadistic pleasure in the misfortune of his comrades.

Effective January 15, 1942, HITLER ordered the transfer of railroad operations in the occupied Soviet Union from the Wehrmacht <sup>^</sup>mittelbar to the Reich Ministry of Transport in order to resolve the crisis. At the same time, Major General GOERITZ, the plenipotentiary of the Smolensk field office, increased the pressure on the railwaymen.

On January 25, 1942, Reich Transport Minister DoRPMÜLLER appeared in Minsk for orientation and mediation. Nevertheless, the disputes between the Chief of Transportation of the Wehrmacht and the Reichsbahners remained bitter.

Soon, the first suspects for the muddled situation came to the German leadership. In June 1941, Karl Eugen was ordered to the Main Railway Directorate (HBD Mitte) in Minsk. It moved into its offices in Minsk's imposing Lenin Tower in mid-September 1941. There HAHN initially held the freight train timetable department and soon took over the operational management himself with responsibility for the entire timetable system. HAHN was then consequently blamed for the failure of the Reichsbahn in the East. On February 16, 1942, a telegram from the Reich Ministry of Transport recalled him from his Minsk post. On February 28, 1942, while traveling home to Kutno, he was arrested on the train. Separately from him, they had also arrested the previous head of the Main Railway Directorate South in Kiev, the department president Erwin LANDENBERGER.

Shortly before, HITLER had ultimately demanded of Chief of Staff HALDER, Chief of Transportation GERCKE, and Secretary of State for Transportation KLEINMANN that the rail transportation system be put in order in the shortest possible time. HITLER HIMSELF threatened State Secretary KLEINMANN personally with Gestapo arrest.

After his arrest, HAHN was brought before Gestapo chief Heinrich MÜLLER at the Berlin headquarters of the secret state police. MÜLLER told HAHN, "You have been arrested by the highest order. Why, you yourself will know best." HAHN was taken with LANDENBERGER to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. They were both accused of some kind of sabotage by being "too careful or even too circumstantial in the performance of their official duties" in the occupied Soviet Union.

In early July 1942, HAHN and LANDENBERGER were released from the concentration camp. HAHN, who during a later assignment told his new commander, Colonel JENNRICH, that he was an uncompromising opponent of the Nazis, survived the war, but was cut by his colleagues in his new position at the Federal Railway Directorate in Stuttgart. On February 8, 1957, he named himself, not even 53 years old. No one knows to say whether the motives for this are to be sought in his experiences in White Russia.

Meanwhile, the catastrophe in the East continued. In February 1942, Albert GANZENMÜLLER became Reichsbahn commissar general in Poltava. GANZENMÜLLER had already been seconded to Poltava in October 1941 at his own request to head the Ost- and Haupt-eisenbahndirektion. He was very successful in eliminating transport difficulties in the winter of

1941/42. Nevertheless, by the end of April 1942, complete chaos seemed to be descending

The OKW had had tens of thousands of coal cars converted into flatbed trucks for the transport of guns and vehicles to the front since not a single one of the actual flatbed trucks had been sent back from the East! >Man< had forgotten about it!

Hundreds of locomotives had been damaged during the winter because no provisions had been made for the extreme cold. When the railcars were unloaded, no one at the Reichsbahn bothered to send them back. result, more than 150,000 railroad cars now clogged the lines behind the Eastern Front, and fully loaded new freight trains could not proceed. These strange occurrences, together with the great distances covered, had so prolonged the average running time of each wagon that proper traffic flow no longer seemed possible. The only solution that General GERCKE, - the OKW's transport chief, was willing to offer was to tip the wagon off the rails, including their loads (!), in order to clear the tracks and send the locomotives back to Germany in convoy. This could beuse either to Germany or to the fighting front!

In this situation, HITLER turned to two men who had already mastered similar situations: MILCH and SPEER. When the two appeared at the Führer's headquarters, HITLER said to them, "The transportation problem is a decisive one.... Because of the transportation question, the war must not be lost. It must therefore be solved. "

SPEER immediately turned to the problem of mass production of locomotives and rolling stock. This resulted in the famous German wartime locomotive BR52. The BR52 was produced in huge numbers and was to prove to one of the best locomotives all time. As late as the 1980s, numerous examples of this locomotive were still in service throughout Europe (and even today on many museum railroads).

MILCH focused on the railroad and inland waterway systems. He paraphrased his powers two days later as follows: "I have

get permission to hang any railroad official from any tree, including the highest directors - and I'm going to do it!" The first thing MILCH ordered was to - now overload the rail cars by up to 20 percent. Different types of freight were stacked on top of each other in a car as it came, and trains ran at speeds 10-20 percent above the maximum allowed. MILCH scoffed, "Much has been written about the vast expanse of Russian space, but these are ridiculous distances!"

It was discovered that the OKW had hoarded thousands of railroad cars in order to be able to supply the troops in France with supplies in case of an >allied invasion<. 50,000 wagons were released from these >reserves< for the Eastern Front.<sup>1</sup>

Everything that had happened in the previous months in terms of transport failure, MILK and SPEAR solved every problem in a few weeks. Thus, in April 1942, sufficient supplies, including the winter clothing that had been ready on the trains months before, finally arrived at the Eastern Front.

In addition, the restoration of the Russian network and the rerouting continued with great energy even during the winter months. Therefore, on April 19, 1942, the Wehrmacht expressed its thanks and appreciation to the head of the eastern branch of the Reich Ministry of Transport, Ministerialrat Dr. Ing. Josef MÜLLER. This had not happened often until then.

The great German rail supply failure lasted from late July 1941 to March 1942. It was not a collection of unfortunate coincidences, but a deliberate program to delay the transfer of vital supplies to the fighting front. Question is exactly how many of the conspirators knew about it. Those at the switching points that replacements and winter clothing did not get through did so with great caution to avoid detection.

This is not to say that >Unternehmen Barbarossa< would have won if the German Ostheer had been fully equipped and had received sufficient supplies. On the other hand, it is clear that besides the neglected armament and equipment, the failure of supplies was one of the decisive reasons for the failure of German Blitzkrieg against Russia. It was already almost on the ground that STALIN's German aides had done a great job!

### **April 1942 . The shortage of supplies before Moscow is investigated by the SD**

The failure of German supplies in the winter of **1941 /42** was also to occupy the SD (Sicherheitsdienst), which was particularly concerned with investigating political opponents.

When Henry PICKER was appointed lawyer at HITLER'S Führer headquarters in March **1942**, he reported that something very soon made him wonder: "Thus the Wehrmacht had been spared purges à la STAUN despite HITLER'S skepticism and despite negative reports constantly coming in from the Security Service and the Party, one of which about the chief of the Reserve Army, General FROMM, i.e. KEITEL'S most important collaborator, - made me particularly wonder".

During the attack on Moscow, there was a shortage of supplies of antifreeze, fuel, spare parts and ammunition for the tanks, as well as winterized crew equipment and winterized rations.

The SD placed a substantial part of the blame here on Colonel General Friedrich FROMM, because he was Chief of the Replacement Army and also Chief of Army Armaments in the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht. As such, he was then replaced by SPEER as Plenipotentiary General for Armaments in the OKW Armaments Office."

Between General FROMM and Admiral CANAMs there was a relationship of trust that had grown over many years. FROMM'S biographer KROENER - stated: "Both were equally pessimistic about the prospects of war, so that they also agreed on the conclusions to be drawn from it". We know about the consequences drawn by the admiral! Was FROMM working in the same way toward the defeat of Germany?

The chargé d'affaires of Switzerland at the time, Hans FRÖLICHER, - reported on an evening event on October **15, 1942, at the OLBMCHT HOME**, to which FROMM AND HIS wife, General THOMAS, and the Italian military attaché, General MARRAS, WERE INVITED, along with other senior officers: "I had the impression that I had been invited to join the generals in a resistance movement."

To this day, the role of the extremely intelligent Colonel General FROMM in his position as Chief of Army Armament remains as nebulous and mysterious as his later role in the July 20 conspiracy.

Agreeing with the conspirators in their objectives, FROMM WAS much closer to the preparations for the overthrow than had previously been assumed. Nevertheless, on the evening of July 20, 1944, he had the four main conspirators executed after a trial by martial law that was questionable in every respect. To this day, this is seen as an ineffectual attempt to eliminate conspirators. Through this act, he should not be able to be proven to have any connection with the July 20 - conspiracy. Survivors of the July 20 Resistance therefore described FROMM in the postwar period as >our traitor<. In view of all this, it may be impossible today to clarify what alleged part Colonel General FROMM HAD in the failure of the German blitzkrieg defense and in the winter crisis of 1941/42.

## **7. Chapter**

### **Did the battle for Moscow have to be lost?**

**If the German victory seemed only a question of time in October 1941, when the Wehrmacht was in front of Moscow, the situation had completely changed in December 1941, and the certain victory turned into a catastrophic defeat, as a result of which**

HITLER **expressed that the war militarily was no  
longer  
was to be won.** --



The >ringing of the alarm bells< -  
but it is not forwarded

It has never been clarified to this day to what extent the OKH (Army High Command) reliably reported to HITLER about the adverse situation on the Eastern Front. Field Marshals BOCK and VON RUNDSTEDT suspected that HITLER was not told the whole truth. The same applied to VON KLEIST's Chief of Staff General ZEITZLER.<sup>1</sup>

The front commanders reacted with incomprehension to this ignorance of the real situation from above.

General Heinz GUDERIAN, then commander of the 2nd Panzer Army south of Moscow, wrote: "We are faced with the great fact that the upper leadership has overstepped the mark, did not want to believe the reports about the declining fighting strength of the troops made ever newer demands, did not make provisions for the harsh winter season and has now been surprised by the Russian cold of - 35 degrees.... " It could hardly have been expressed better.

There is indeed evidence that Field Marshal VON KLEIST's warning indications of his long exposed flank and unfavorable weather conditions were concealed from HITLER when he unexpectedly ordered VON KLEIST's Panzer Army to take the city of Rostov. Then, on - November 20, 1941, three fast German divisions had entered the city, which then had 500,000 inhabitants. A decisive German victory, as it seemed, because Rostov was the road to the Caucasus and to the OIL

That STALIN's general staff tried everything to snatch Rostov from the Germans again in order to block the way to the Caucasus for VON KLEIST's tank army was therefore obvious. VON KLEIST's tanks had subsequently begun to retreat again because of incredibly strong Russian pressure. On November 30, 1941, HITLER forbade this. In a dispute with Field Marshal VON BRAUCHITSCH, HITLER therefore insisted that VON RUNDSTEDT issue the appropriate orders to VON KLEIST. VON RUNDSTEDT refused and resigned.

Under the impression that VON BRAUCHITSCH DID not fully inform him, HITLER immediately flew to VON KLEIST's headquarters at Mariupol on the Sea of Azov. Apparently sensing that something, he took none of his general staff officers with him, only his adjutants

HITLER intended to dismiss VON KLEIST and ZEITZLER AS well, but things turned out quite differently. SS-Gruppenführer Sepp DIETRICH, whose 1st SS Panzer Division had been in the midst of the heaviest

fighting, stood behind his superiors, and Hitler's adjutant SCHMUNOT told Hitler that ZEITZLER had shown him the copy of their messages sent before the attack on Rostov. In these, precisely this outcome of the enterprise had been prophesied. '

This aroused the greatest astonishment in HITLER, WHO HAD seen any of these reports. He exclaimed: "The Panzer Army saw all this coming and reported it in advance. They are not to blame." On 3 December 1941, he told Jom's staff by telephone that the 1st Panzer Army had already reported to Army Group on 21 and 22 November 1941 its grave concerns about the threat to its eastern flank and about any shortage of reserves. Army Group South had also expressed itself to the effect that it had passed on the threatening situation to the OKH. HITLER now allowed Field Marshal VON REICHENAU, VON RUNDSTEDT'S successor, to reveal Rostov. VON RUNDSTEDT, by the way, was later entrusted again with responsible highest command posts.

The loss of Rostov was the first serious setback of the war in the East. Even though most of the important Donets region remained in the hands of the Wehrmacht thereafter, nothing could hide the fact that the German Eastern Army had suffered a serious defeat. General GUDERIAN, - at his army command outside Moscow, spoke the somber words, "This is the first ringing of the alarm bells."

But again, no one upstairs wanted to hear them. The gate was now open for the drama of the winter battle outside Moscow.

The critical phase is gambled away -  
the prevented capture of Moscow in October 1941

On October 14, 1941, the fighting in the Vyazma cauldron came to an end, and only shortly after that the Russian troops in the three cauldrons near Bryansk and Trubchevsk also surrendered. Over 670,000 prisoners were taken. With this victory, the Wehrmacht had achieved a numerical superiority on the overall front for the first time since the beginning of >Unternehmen Barbarossa<. The German Eastern Army with about 2.78 million men now faced 2.24 million soldiers of the Red Army, who were also exhausted and completely demoralized. Despite all obstacles and oddities, in the fall of 1941 >Unternehmen Barbarossa< seemed to be on the verge of success.

success. optimism of the original German plan to defeat the Red Army celebrated its resurrection

On October 12, 1941, the Soviet party newspaper *Pravda* had spoken for the first time of a "terrible danger" threatening the country. English radio also said that the Russians had their backs to the wall. Despite valiant resistance, the Red Army had by then suffered losses equal to its total strength originally assumed by Germans.

As the reward of all the fighting, a huge 350 km hole had been punched in the Soviet eastern front. The German tank troops, though weakened, had only three days' march left to reach STALIN'S capital.

However, strange things happened already on October 11, 1941. On that day, the Army High Command announced the withdrawal of the 8th Army Corps with three divisions and the first cavalry division, which was later to become the 24th Panzer. The detachment of the 5th, 8th, and 28th Infantry Divisions followed. They were to be reorganized into mountain units at a time when Army Group Center would have needed every man to take Moscow, which lay there like ripe fruit.

The commander-in-chief of the 4th Army, Günther VON KLUGE who sympathized with the resistance, also behaved incomprehensibly. He did not use several divisions released at Vyazma to reinforce his thrust wing, but kept them as reserves.

Thus, the entire 9th Army Corps with four divisions became an Army Group Reserve on October 12, only one day after the announcement of the withdrawal of the 8th Army Corps to the west.

Indeed, the soldiers at the front felt that something was wrong. Heinz Otto FAUSTEN reported that his Kampfgruppe and the 1st Panzer Division, which had captured the town of Kalinin in a dramatic tank attack the previous day, now expected to advance to Moscow. The Russian capital was 100 miles to the south and would now have been the natural target for future advances. Incredibly, however, the 1st Armored Division was instead sent north, in the complete opposite direction. The soldiers completely bewildered by this arrangement

The chaos was magnified when, after a 20-mile march, they received a radio message giving them fresh orders. These came from Army Group North, which was stationed outside Leningrad. The 1st Armored Division was now to make a pincer movement in front of Leningrad. FAUSTEN recalled that this sudden swing proved of little use to him: "We had worked hard to reach this position. We lost far too much time, and I wondered if an opportunity was not slipping through our fingers here." He would therefore have said to a comrade, "This is not the way our troops should be used."

Other people shared the concerns as well. Carl WAGENER belonged to the task force of Panzer Group III and recalled: "With the capture of Kalinin, a great tactical opportunity had opened up for us. We now held the cornerstone of Moscow's defenses and could immediately advance against the city's poorly protected northern flank. The city was at our mercy with the roads still well traveled and only less than a day's drive away. Indeed, our armored forces and the 9th Infantry Army, which was called in to support us, were ordered to attack the completely unimportant town of Torzhok more than 100 miles north of Kalinin. We heard the new orders from the Army High Command with a sense of complete incomprehension. history of warfare usually exhibits the cardinal principle that success is usually always on the side of those can muster a large superiority of forces at a critical time. And yet - unbelievably - we used in this vital mo-

Front



ment did not maximize the concentration of our strength against the enemy's weakest point. Our tank forces should have been thrown immediately against the last weak defenses of Moscow. Instead, the objective of the great offensive was fragmented and broken into many small parts." A mistake with >system<?

The weakening and misplacement of German troops before Moscow in the critical, opportunity-filled days of October 1941 also coincided with the beginning of the withdrawal of key army units. They were to be refreshed in Western Europe - that is, far away from the Eastern Front.

Thus, a unique opportunity for the final push on Moscow was lost. The tank tops of the Wehrmacht had been only three days' march from 'capital when the rainy period came on with full force. Although the rainy period also severely hampered the Russian effort, the Russians were able to catch themselves, and Sc^^ow was given time to reinforce the weakest parts of the Russian positions in front of Moscow with reserves rushing in from Siberia. This is suspiciously reminiscent of the events before Lemngrad in the summer of 1941.

Thus, on 29 October 1941, Field Marshal VON KLUGE had to join an irritated HITLER at the Führer's headquarters at Wolfsschanze in East Prussia for a report. When VON KLUGE returned the following day he reported, "The Fuehrer finds it very difficult to believe the written reports from Army Group Center about the shortage of soldiers, supply difficulties and roads that are difficult to pass. He is very disturbed that Moscow has not yet fallen, and he is

Russian autumn rainy  
weather brought the  
decisive turn, where the  
mud proved to an almost  
insurmountable obstacle  
for vehicles. Here: a  
Panzer III is stuck in the  
mud while another tries  
to tow it free. In the end,  
it was the mud that  
saved Moscow rather  
than the Red Army

amazed that we had not foreseen all these contingencies."

The incredible response of the Army command to these difficulties was on November 3, 1941, that seven armored divisions were to be withdrawn from the Eastern Front and refreshed. Two armored divisions to be reorganized, and two others were to be used in the tropics. It is difficult to think here only of incompetence.

In the meantime, the muddy period had given way to the onset of the Russian winter. It is debated today whether this winter period of 1941/42 - was at all more severe than the meteorological average. Germany's troops, who, as reported elsewhere here, had been deprived of their most basic winter equipment were now ripe for disaster.

### **The failure of the final offensive on Moscow**

If the events at >Heeresgruppe Mitte< between mid-October and early November 1941 could already be described as quite strange, the following

It would have been time for the Wehrmacht to entrench itself in good winter positions in order to be able to attack again in the spring. In fact, most soldiers of the Wehrmacht of all ranks expected this solution.

It was therefore incomprehensible that on November 13, 1941, Chief of General Staff HALDER announced a renewed attack on Moscow "taking advantage of the frost period", which was to mean the end for many German soldiers.

German infantry before their preparation for the advance towards the Moscow-Volga Canal - beginning of December 1941! An entrenchment in good winter positions would have made more sense.

events can lead to even more puzzlement.<sup>12</sup>

On November 13, 1941, Chief of General Staff HALDER had prevailed against all objections and scheduled a conference with the Chiefs of General Staff of the Army Groups and seven armies to give them instructions for the >final offensive< against Moscow.

HALDER announced there in all seriousness that he had six weeks left, as he expected a winter with little snow, to reach the major objectives of Volgoda, Gorky, Moscow, Stalingrad and Maikop. Representatives of the troops on the ground were unanimous in opposing any broader objectives beyond Moscow. It was "not May, nor was it France." Even at the time of the conference at Orscha, German troops had struggling weeks with poorly equipped vehicles and a lack of winter equipment. Although HALDER had encouraged discussion, the coming attack on Moscow was presented to commanders as a decision already made. Generalquartiermeister WAGNER had assured them that there

were enough supplies at the front. This did not correspond to the truth!

On November 16, 1941, the Germans attacked, initially causing the Russians great difficulties. On November 27, the critical decision became apparent when the 7th Armored Division reached Yakhroma, 37 miles north of Moscow, and was able to occupy the crossing point of the Moscow-Volga Canal.

On the morning of December 1, 1941, German motorcycle gunners reached the Khimki metro station, only 18 from the Russian capital. A gap had opened in the defenses of Moscow, and for a few hours direct access to the city lay open to the Germans. But instead of advancing further, General HOEPNER's troops retreated. To this day it is not clear why this happened.

In the meantime, disputes arose among the German generals about how to proceed with the attack on Moscow. VON KLUGE waited several days and did not attack until December 1, 1941, with completely insufficient strength for the intended task. Nevertheless, a single one of his divisions had succeeded in breaking through, and again the forces of the Russian defenders were stretched.

By the evening of December 2, 1941, the scales had finally tipped in favor of the Russians.

The northern defensive positions in front of Moscow were stabilized by the sudden arrival of new Soviet troops. Additionally, due to lack of supplies and winter equipment, the Germans' General Gotthardt HEINRICI complained in despair on December 4, 1941: "Why were we sent into a winter battle so poorly equipped?"

### **There were enough warnings: Did the Russian winter offensive in 1941 really come as a surprise?**

On Thursday, November 27, **1941**, in Moscow, Generals SCHUKOV, SOKOLOVSKY, BULGANIN, ROKOSSOVSKY, VLASOV, GOVOROV and YEFREMOV jointly presented a plan for the counteroffensive of STALIN's Western Front. The plan had been worked out in its final form by Marshal SCHAPOSCHNIKOV. By then, **21** of the total 34 Soviet Far East units from Siberia were already in front of Moscow. Furthermore, important operational tasks were also planned for troops of the Kalinin Front and the Southwest Front<sup>1</sup>

However, the German leadership at that time no longer expected the possibility of a planned attack by the Red Army with operational objectives. The OKH (Army High Command) believed that both sides' "last battalions" would be in action. On the German side, this was undoubtedly so.

According to the OKH, the decision was to be brought about by the stronger will, which - how could it be otherwise - existed on the German side. The >Foreign Armies East< Division reported in mid-November 1941 that the Russians had 200 large units, but that their fighting strength was less than 50 percent because more than half of their officers and enlisted men were untrained. In fact, however, the Soviets then possessed 373 major formations, some of them with high combat power, because the Russians had begun moving formations from the Far East to the West, contrary to the predictions of the German defense services. As early as November 17, General GUDERIAN received news of the appearance of Siberians at Uslovaya and other large railroad discharges on the Ryazan-Kolomna line. The appearance of the Siberians caused a panic in the 112.1.D. - an unbelievable misjudgment of the enemy situation was at hand. <sup>2</sup>

Actually, there should have been no surprise. Despite excellent camouflage measures on the part of Soviet German air reconnaissance repeatedly reported new Russian troop accumulations in the Moscow area Lieutenant Colonel GREFFRAT reported about it in the post-war period: The reports of the airmen about accumulations of strong forces on both sides and eastward of Moscow were regarded by gentlemen of the leadership as "spookiness". In addition, long-range reconnaissance aircraft of Air Fleet II reported incredibly large Russian railroad transport trains heading from the east toward the Moscow area, Gorky and Yaroslav. <sup>3,4</sup> Curiously, they were almost never attacked by the Luftwaffe. In a postwar letter Field Marshal KESSELRING wrote THAT he could not avoid the fatal admission far-reaching, momentous conclusions should have been drawn from these Russian transport movements But one did not!

Swedes also supplied their German partners very generously with secret information about the Soviet Union's plans included precise information about the Red Army's preparations for the counteroffensive near Moscow in December 1941. This information remained with the same defense group that had not forwarded the Finnish warnings. <sup>1</sup>

Thus, the German authorities did not take seriously or did not pass on good quality intelligence about the Russian buildup of forces. Traitors in the High Command of the Luftwaffe may have contributed to this as well as the defense of Admiral CANARIS and the German radio reconnaissance of General FELLGIEBEL. AS LATE as the evening of December 4, 1941, the OKH's Abteilung Fremde Heere Ost< (Foreign Armies East Division) judged the Red Army's combat strength not so high that "the Russian would be capable of a large-scale offensive without bringing in substantial reinforcements at this time." <sup>2</sup> At the same time,



German air reconnaissance reported "strong enemy advancing from Kashira ~~un~~ south," thus the beginning of the Russian counteroffensive. <sup>3</sup> Nothing happened on the German side!

Two days later, the Russian counteroffensive broke out. Its start meant a fiasco for >Unternehmen Barbarossa\* and a retreat of truly Napoleonic proportions.

Russian Army General ZHUKOV acknowledged after the war, "A major role in the success of the counterattack before Moscow was played by the strategic surprise we achieved."

### **Why was the air force before Moscow weakened at the crucial moment?**

When Operation Typhoon - the first German offensive on Moscow - got bogged down in the mud in mid-October 1941, the German air force command behaved strangely beginning of November, example, a quarter of the personnel in the east dismissed leave. Then, at the end of November 1941, Luftflotte II and some subordinate units were withdrawn and transferred to Italy. It was believed that the Luftwaffe in the central section of the Eastern Front was "too strong." <sup>4</sup>

This withdrawal occurred at the same time that winter on the Eastern Front was already hitting in November. Snowstorms and cold snaps wreaked havoc on sensitive German aircraft technology, while the hydraulics and weapons of Luftwaffe planes failed as oil and lubricants lost their glide. In contrast, the Red Air Force could rely on well-developed airfields around Moscow equipped with warming sheds. This apparently not impress the German Luftwaffe planners however, as they weakened the airmen in front of Moscow.

Strikingly, 13 fighter groups left the battle space in front of Moscow, just when the decisive last German offensive at stake. Thus JG 51, weakened by the transfer of its 4th Group to Army Group North, had to secure the advance of four armies with nine army corps from the air with only three groups. This securing task was ^^possible to solve. But not only fighters were withdrawn from Moscow, because also dive bomber squadrons like StG 77, III./StG I and I. StG 2 left the combat zone as well as the combat squadrons III. KG 4, I. KG 2, the KG r 100 as well as destroyer units of I./ZG 26. All other air force units in the area front of Moscow got the advance warning that they would probably have to move elsewhere soon, too.

In addition to Luftflotte II, the 2nd Fliegerkorps had already been

withdrawn to the Mediterranean. Thus General VON RICHTHOFEN's VIII.Fliegerkorps bear the sole responsibility in front of Moscow

While the German air force was decisively weakened in front of Moscow, the Russian air force threw everything they had at the Germans: from old I-153 biplanes to modern Jak-1, LaGG-3 and Mig-3 fighters.

In general, the units at the front had the impression that "higher ups" showed little idea of the situation at the front. Sometimes the orders came directly from the air corps, then from the air fleet or from Berlin. Was this all just coincidence, or was there some method behind it - doubts arise

As if all this were not enough, the tried and tested Flugmeldekompanie 7/32, which until then had been deployed with great success on the Russian front with Heeresgruppe Mitte, was withdrawn from eastern operations. This greatly weakened early warning of Russian air attacks

Then, when the German armies had to face Moscow again in heavy frost on 18 November 1941, the Luftwaffe was so unnecessarily weakened by these massive withdrawals that STALIN'S airmen, who were actually already on the ground, achieved air superiority. On November 29, 1941, repeated Russian air attacks stopped the 10th mot. Division of the 2nd Panzer Army, giving the hard-pressed 50th Soviet Army time to regroup in the Tula sector.

Germans' final decisive blow to take Moscow on December 2 ended in losses and without results as a result of Soviet air superiority. Free of German fighters, JL-2 strike aircraft destroyed the supply columns of the 3rd and 4th Panzer Armies, forcing Colonels General HOEPNER and REINHARDT to end their offensives for lack of fuel and ammunition - no more than 16 kilometers northwest of the Russian capital.

The reduced air support thus one of the reasons why the last German offensive before Moscow came to a halt in December. On December 5, 1941, the Russian counteroffensive broke out! Incredibly, in the same month, numerous other Eastern Front fighter pilots were sent on four-week home leave - because of an alleged shortage of aircraft.

Even as the German retreat from Moscow then began, Soviet bombers and strike aircraft held plentiful harvest among the retreating German

E^units.

Reports of survivors of these attacks tell that even the dead of these air raids could be buried and that the runways to the west clogged with bombed as well as with shot-up vehicles and carts. A picture similar to later Normandy in 1944 - only this time by their own failure! For the first time in this war, the loss rate of the Russian airmen was less than one percent.

Only when "Operation Typhoon" had long since failed, the time of carefree attacks from the air came to an end for the Russians. Hectically bombers of II/KG4 and II/KG30 as well as the staff and the I/ZG4 (destroyers) were thrown to the eastern front.

Within two weeks, destructive air strikes BY RCHTHOFENS then took the wind out of the Soviet counteroffensive, but "Unternehmen Barbarossa" had perished before Moscow.

During the war, two other instances became known in which a similar weakening of the German Luftwaffe occurred before a decisive campaign: the redeployment of German fighters from Normandy two days before the invasion began on June 6, 1944, and the withdrawal of fighters from Operation ?? "Bagration" on June 22, 1944!

### **Deadly Indecision - The German High Command after the Start of the Soviet Winter Offensive**

Numerous reports of German Russian fighters of all ranks show how much they felt abandoned by their high command after the outbreak of the Russian counteroffensive before Moscow. Lack of orders or unwieldy orders did the rest, so that the Russian attack could develop into a catastrophe.

Completely perplexed, HITLER could hardly believe what was happening in front of Moscow. On December 6, 1941, the Führer had been informed about the sudden change in the situation in front of Moscow. However, this information was fragmentary and incomplete. Not even now were all the Soviet armies with which one had to deal marked on the map table of the High Command: three Russian armies were still missing there on December 6, 1941, the 1st, 10th and 20th armies.<sup>1</sup>

While the 10th Army had gone directly into battle after a succession of night marches, the Russian 1st and 20th Armies had been prepared for the offensive in the immediate vicinity of the front lines for the counteroffensive. Astonishing that the German reconnaissance does not want to have noticed anything of this.

Wolfram von **Richtofen**, a senior Luftwaffe commander, wrote in his diary on December 6, 1941, that Hitler did not trust the reports supplied to him and that he wanted to fly to the front himself to get an impression of the real situation on the spot, as he had done shortly before at Rostov. He was prevented from doing so.

Instead, Hitler's headquarters continued to send inquiry after inquiry to the front as to why the seemingly safe German attack could not continue. Reports of the appearance of large numbers of fresh Russian troops were received with disbelief.

Thus it came about that the misinformed German headquarters only on the

8. December 1941 had the offensive on Moscow stopped because of the "unusually early onset of winter weather". By then, the German troops had already been in broad retreat for 3 days.

Colonel General Guderian wrote south of Moscow in frustration, "I would never have believed that such a brilliant military position could be so completely ruined within 2 months."

### **December 1941: Hitler realizes how he has been betrayed**

Hitler's architect, Giesler, gave a post-war account of a December 1941 conversation the Reich Chancellor had with him in which he said the following: "Giesler, we just got away and escaped annihilation by Bolshevism - Staun was almost ready to pounce on us!" He then explained to him his experiences after the attack:

"To the complete underestimation of the enemy, to the false reports about his reserves and armor strength, to his deceptions and confusions, added an incomprehensible treachery. The preemptive strike was really no surprise to the enemy; it was communicated to him, to the day and in good time. And that's not all: every detail, every plan of attack was the enemy's by German traitors!

I had reckoned with the treachery of X-day. The surprise could only lie, as in the French campaign, in the strategic course of our attack. This strategy was carefully considered. ... But the stubbornness and single-track thinking of my generals thwarted the strategic planning. In the month of August, which was so important for the decision of the Barbarossa operation, I was so weakened by illness that I could not muster the necessary perseverance and steadfastness against my generals to carry through my planning.

Twice I thought I was close to victory - I was wrong, and I was deceived!"<sup>1</sup>

This shows that HITLER WAS already aware by the end of **1941** that an incomprehensible betrayal had prevented a possible victorious end to the war for Germany in the East.

The question arises, however, as to why more active action was not taken against the sources of betrayal thereafter.

### **The end of >Barbarossa<:**

#### **The consequences of the frostbitten offensive in front of Moscow**

The victims, which cost the failed battle for Moscow and the defense against the not in time recognized Russian counteroffensive in the winter **1941/42**, were not to be replaced for Germany in the following time. The losses of the Eastern Army in men amounted to **920000** at the end of January **1942**. In the area of Heeresgruppe Mitte alone, about **400000** soldiers were missing at that time. A study of the High Command of the Wehrmacht stated at the same time that "a full replenishment of the losses of the winter is no longer possible".

The losses of materiel and equipment were similarly devastating. The German Eastern Army had begun the Russian campaign with an initial inventory of **3580** tanks. At the end of December **1941**, the losses of tanks and assault guns amounted to **3730**, at the end of January to **4240**. These losses (vehicles shot down, as well as those left behind due to the retreat) could not be compensated for in the short term with an average tank production of only **350** units per month at that time. The **16** armored divisions deployed in Russia reported an inventory of only 140 serviceable tanks on March 30, 1942, at the end of the successful repulse of the Russian counteroffensive.<sup>1</sup>

mobility of the German eastern army had also been massively restricted. Of the approximately 500,000 motor vehicles at the beginning of the campaign, 100,000 had already broken down by the end of November of the same year and another 250,000 had to be repaired. These figures were taken from the period before the start of the Russian counteroffensive. The number of horses, so important for Germany, had also fallen by 210,000 by the end of January 1942.

Russian films of the Wehrmacht retreat roads show destruction images of biblical proportions. They of earlier German footage from the summer of 1940 of the beaches of Dunkirk. There, the British had to leave all their equipment on the beach just to save their naked lives

In the winter of 1941/42, however, not only tanks, trucks and guns lay on

the roads of Russia, but also countless frostbitten soldiers and horses of the German Eastern Army.

In a status report on the combat value of all divisions stationed in the East the Army High Command noted at the end of March 1942 that of the 162 divisions deployed on the Eastern Front, only six were still fully operational for the coming offensive operations. But this was not only the fault of the Russian winter and the Red Army!

Today, the defeat of the Germans before Moscow is often compared with NAPOLEON'S retreat from Moscow in 1812.

## **Chapter 8**

### **The background of the winter catastrophe 1941/42**

**How could an army that already  
had victory sightsuffer a strategic defeatwithin a few  
weeks  
?**



Germany's Wehrmacht began the attack on the Soviet Union on July 22, 1941, with a manpower of 3.4 million, joined by about half a million allied troops from various countries

The personnel losses that occurred after the start of hostilities were compiled by the Quartermaster General in the Army High Command (OKH) in 10 daily reports and monthly reports. However, they were correct only until the end of September 1941!<sup>1</sup>

exception of the first calculated 6-week period from 10 October to 20 November 1941 thereafter, Wehrmacht personnel shortfalls were much underestimated

The decisive error was that losses within the respective 6-week period were only set in the average total strength of the army. Thus, the losses were not calculated in relation to the absolute loss figures since the beginning of the campaign, as would have been correct. As a result, the longer the eastern campaign lasted, the lower the German losses became in percentage terms until the end of November 1941!

In fact, the personnel losses of the Wehrmacht amounted to about 19 percent of the soldiers with which it had started on June 21, 1941. Since the large losses could not be compensated, the units of the German Eastern Army had to fight with constantly decreasing head counts

The picture of the personnel situation reported by Quartermaster General WAGNER was inaccurate and incomplete from the fall of 1941. Wehrmacht leadership was a false picture of non-existent strength in its assessment of the situation

It was obvious that this would lead to wrong decisions by the Supreme Leadership.

### **Tricksters at work: The cover-up of the terrible material losses after the beginning of >Operation Barbarossa<.**

It was not only in the case of personnel losses that attempts were made to pull the wool over the eyes of the leadership.

The reports on material and weapon losses filled out with German thoroughness were only in the first period of the campaign

in Russia were reliable. Especially at the time of the last major German attack on Moscow, they gave way to conspicuously unclear reports that no longer allowed any conclusions to be drawn about the ratio of losses to replacements. Thus, only one "List of Losses of Weapons in the East" was issued, which contained losses for the 10-day period and total losses from the beginning of the campaign. 10-day report of 5 December 1941, for example, stated: "The losses of weapons reported in November, with the exception of I.F.H. (light field how; author's note), are lower than in October and, especially in the case of IF. In fact, especially in December 1941, the situation was so desperate because of high losses and insufficient replacement of 1. F H 16 guns had to be taken from the West to compensate for the lack of guns. These were still from the last days of the First World War. troops stationed in the west had to make do with even much older F.K.16 n. A. <sup>1</sup>The arsenals in the Reich must now have been completely empty, unless the last training guns were to be removed.

Far from the truth, these trickeries reflected completely false strength ratios to Hitler and the top leadership, which, just like the falsified data on personnel losses, triggered military decisions that resulted in the deaths of many soldiers

At the front, the impression had to be created that one's own leadership

### **Why the majority of German vehicles broke down in the Russian winter - could this have been prevented?**

The government had increasingly lost touch with the actual conditions on the ground and its orders and directives could no longer be trusted.

The initial phase of the Eastern campaign had already seen an

increasing failure of motor vehicles and other wheeled vehicles. This high wear and tear was mainly due to poor road conditions, sensitive technology and a lack of spare parts

However, the situation for the absolutely necessary German motor vehicle and truck stock to be particularly critical view of the impending winter. In fact, winter equipment, lubricating oils and other necessary equipment had been provided in good time for many standard types. Thus, in mid-November 1941, it was reported that "the mass of winter accessories for motor vehicles" had been delivered to the front.<sup>1</sup>

This was an outright lie. The majority of German motor vehicles were lost completely unprepared in the first Russian winter

The failure to introduce the cold start procedure<sup><time</sup> also proved particularly tragic

### **Why was the cold start procedure introduced so late?**

As early as 1939, the Luftwaffe in Rechlin had demonstrated the cold start procedure to HITLER. It was a simple procedure internal combustion engines (oil dilution with a little gasoline). The Army had been made aware of the cold-start procedure twice since the Rechlin demonstration but had rejected it repeatedly until November 10, 1941.<sup>2</sup>

Only then was this method approved by the OKH and OKW. When Field Marshal MILCH learned of this belated order he exploded, "If an order goes out from an authority beyond the winter start on November 10, it takes 8 weeks to get it around Germany. Now think of that on the Eastern Front!"

MILCH ordered an investigation and learned that the Army Quartermaster General had not published his own "Leaflet for the Operation of Motor Vehicles in Winter" until October 10, 1941, and that the subsequent pamphlet, "Motor Vehicles in Winter," had been issued another month later. Supplements on special measures still followed in January and February 1942.

Wehrmacht's losses of weapons and equipment on the Eastern Front during the winter correspondingly high as a result of these omissions alone

### **With tropical gear and shorts in the ice hell**

The supply situation, especially in the area of Heeresgruppe Mitte<sup><</sup>, showed numerous peculiarities in 1941/1942.

This included not only the misdirection of supplies described

elsewhere and the withdrawal of strong units shortly before the decisive thrust on Moscow. In fact, they managed to send tank units with tropical equipment against Moscow.

Evidence shows that in the fall of **1941** tanks with desert camouflage, sand filters and crews with pith helmets suddenly appeared on the Eastern Front before Moscow. At a time when there was already a >supply cutoff< on the Eastern Front, the **5th** Panzer Division had been hastily moved eastward.

The **5th Panzer** Division was equipped as a tropical division to reinforce ROMMEL in Libya and was loaded onto the railroad without refitting. Only through the initiative of members of the **5th** Panzer Division was it possible, at least in part, to exchange their tropical equipment for standard equipment during the stopover while being transported to the front.

The men of the 5th Panzer Division then also arrived in Russia just in time to get stuck in the Russian mud with their sandy yellow Panzers III. On its very first mission this division was badly battered, and Otto SKORZENY, then still serving with the >SS Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler<, wrote that his division had to help out to restore the situation.<sup>1</sup> The officers of the 5th Panzer Division and the Leibstandarte would then have jointly considered the situation very disconcerting.

For the Panzer III of the 5th Panzer Division, even white paint was scarce. One had to help oneself with improvised shape-dissolving camouflages like wide stripes of white lime paint on a desert yellow background.

An even worse drama occurred in January 1941, at the time of ZHUKOV's counteroffensive.<sup>2,3</sup> It had finally been some German reinforcements from the west to the struggling eastern front. However, - Panzer Group 4 reported, "The troops complain that the replacements arrive with inadequate equipment; because of the complete lack of winter clothing, these people are not yet accustomed to the severe cold anyway and are often completely exhausted before they even go into battle."

What became known here was the 81st Infantry Division, which was stationed on the mild French Atlantic coast in December 1941. On - December 27, 1941, orders arrived for the 189th Regiment of the 81st - Infantry Division to be sent immediately to Russia. The following day, the men were already climbing aboard a military train. There was no special food, winter clothing, or other equipment. The men began to freeze in their light overcoats. In Warsaw rations were received for the first time. The next time already in the middle of Belarus at -25 degrees. After 13 days of continuous travel, companies of miserably freezing men climbed out of the transport train on January 5, 1942. Not a single one of them had a winter coat, there were no gloves and no earflaps - nothing. Shortly after leaving the train station, many men had frozen toes and ears in the -30 degree cold. Before it was possible to equip the regiment, which had a withdrawal strength of 3,000 men, at least with the most basic necessities, the order to deploy against JEREMENKO's regiments of the 249th Rifle Division arrived.

At night the thermometer dropped to -42 degrees. The Russians knew that behind the 189th Infantry Regiment in Toropez there were large rations camps of Army Group Center with huge food stockpiles.

for forwarding to offices of the OKW  
st and BdE -, Berlin  
I.

Secret Command

d to me again today that troops sent to the Eastern Front by rail do not have the additional necessary winter  
y transfer to you the responsibility for ensuring that in the future every troop train leaving the Reich border  
opped with the winter clothing that is absolutely indispensable for the fight in the East. You are to see to it at  
er clothing continuously accumulating from the wool collection is laid out at suitable transit stations  
ted the troops passing through. Any other task will take second place to this obligation hereby imposed upon  
upon all home service offices of the Wehrmacht for this purpose.  
r for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda- is instructed to meet your requirements without delay  
g of rations, including roughage and stoves, remains in effect.

The Leader and Supreme Commander  
the Wehrmacht

the city. Since the Russians were also starving, the conquest of Toropez became an important war goal for them.

The battle now became a sacrificial walk for the 189th Infantry Regiment. Together with an engineer company, a few supply units, and the second division of the 181 Artillery Regiment, the regiment fought to the literal last man in the battle against two Soviet rifle divisions. Despite a complete lack of winter equipment, the regiment inflicted heavy losses on the forward divisions of the 4th Soviet Shock Army. Even the Soviet Colonel General JEREMENKO, in the post-war period, repeatedly emphasized the sacrificial course of this regiment.

The 189th Regiment was also successful for a time, but on January 13, 1942, Colonel General JEREMENKO pushed in two more divisions and overwhelmed the hapless German forces. By January 15, only fighting remnants existed. Just 40 survivors of the regiment managed to make their way to the German front on January 18, 1941.

After the destruction of the 189th Infantry Regiment, the way was clear for JEREMENKO to reach the huge supply depots in Toropez. Forty rations of butter and other fats, canned meat and fish, concentrates, flour, sugar, dried fruit, chocolate and much else now changed hands. The Russian army could feed itself from these supplies for a whole month. Success in Toropez was therefore of paramount importance to operations, according to JEREMENKO.

After the breakthrough at Toropez, there was no coherent German front between Velikiye Luki and Rzhev for 125 km of width.

From France, another three divisions, the 83rd, the 330th, and the 250th - Infantry Division were now thrown into Russia by rail transport. They, too,

had no suitable equipment and were thrown directly out of the transport trains against the Russian regiments. At **-25 to -40** degrees, they managed to inflict unexpectedly high casualties on the Russian troops. Thus, by its own account, JEREMENKO's **249th** Rifle Division had only **1400** men left at the end of January **1942**. On January **9**, it had started to attack the German front with **8000 men**.

There are indications that some things were not done properly during the transport of German reinforcements from France to the Eastern Front in January **1942**. In fact, at least some winter equipment seems to sent them. However, this never reached the soldiers, as it was misdirected to southern France. Also, after their arrival, the soldiers reported conspicuous crisscrossing of the Reich, which would have taken a senseless amount of time.

Via detours, HITLER came to know about these strange events and reacted to them with a Fuehrer order. The fact that this was deliberate sabotage was not admitted until after the war.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Where was the winter equipment? - A dark secret?***

One of the worst experiences from the point of view of German soldiers surviving the war was having to spend the Russian winter of **1941/42** without any special protective clothing. Not even the normal standard army winter equipment was available. If the temperatures had already dropped to minus **30** degrees in November **1941**, the mercury column dropped to minus **40** degrees in some places during the first winter of the Russian campaign.

The legend attributes to HITLER an emphatic prohibition of all preparations for a winter war. However, there is no reference to it in military documents!<sup>2, 3</sup>

The German army generals in charge then made excuses by saying that HITLER's directive provided for a campaign against Russia which "will be completed before the onset of winter". It was thus easy to overinterpret the spirit of such orders in order to weaken the German war effort without being prosecuted. We will come across such examples again and again elsewhere.

The Luftwaffe behaved completely differently.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the precautions taken by General MILCH and the Luftwaffe's quartermaster general, General der Flieger VON SEIDEL, the Luftwaffe units had procured winter clothing. When it came to MILCH's ears that the Army would not order any special winter clothing, he commented in March 1941, "I will gladly take that on my head," and ordered the production of

3 to 4 sets each of woolen linen, 5 pairs of stockings, high felt boots, and sheepskins for each of the one million Luftwaffe soldiers on the future eastern front. He also ordered the immediate procurement of winter equipment for the squadrons. The winter clothing was produced as usual by the Army clothing offices. There was thus no reason why the Army could not have protected its men in the same way, if only it had wanted to.

Allegedly, however, 60 army divisions, namely those designated as army garrison of the forces for Russia in winter had nevertheless received winter clothing nng at the beginning of the campaign. In addition, they received the normal winter clothing of the army, such as the so-called >coat coats<

Now something amazing happened: All this had to be surrendered when the offensive began. But the Luftwaffe, thanks to Generalquartiermeister VON SEIDEL'S intervention, refused to do the same. In the 1st Flak Corps, for example, the padded wide overcoats, head protectors, gloves and body bandages had been left with the troops and carried by them. As far as vehicle losses during the summer and fall campaigns had permitted, protective clothing was at the front as it was needed.<sup>2</sup>

This was completely different with the army. Here we have a gloomy ge- heinnis about which no historian who wants to make a career universities may publish

In the aftermath of the war, it emerged that General OLBRICHT had countered HITLER'S warfare wherever he could through official channels.<sup>3</sup> Allegedly, he had taken all measures within his power to send the Wehrmacht into the Russian campaign with sufficient winter clothing. According to information in



OLBRICHT'S biography compared specimens of Russian and Finnish winter equipment, developed their own, and an exhibition of possible winter clothing had been organized. <sup>1</sup> HITLER was invited, but did not appear. The winter clothing had then been sent to Berchtesgaden and a decision had been urgently requested from the OKW (High Command of the Wehrmacht) in order to gain time for orders, production, distribution and the like. Only when it was too late had the General Army Office received the answer from KEITEL, STATING that by the beginning of the cold season the campaign in the East would be over and therefore winter clothing should only be provided for 1.2 million occupation troops. However, this had arrived just as little from when the Russian winter came.

<sup>1</sup> These were probably  
remnants from the  
Winter War in Finland  
in 1940.

In fact, Generalquartiermeister Eduard WAGNER had already held a meeting on July 29, 1941, to provide winter clothing for the troops. <sup>2</sup> Richard SCHULZE-KOSSENS, then Adolf HITLER's personal adjutant, wrote to Dr. Henry PICKER on May 12, 1976, that one of his first official acts at the Führer's headquarters had been to attend the presentation of the winter equipment by the Quartermaster General on October 26, 1941. WAGNER had reported "that everything was well arranged" because HITLER, according to SCHULZE-KOSSENS, HAD already ordered in the summer to make conscientious preparations for the winter service. WAGNER, he said, had even given exact figures at the demonstration as to the number of winter clothing that could be provided to the individual army groups. Lieutenant General WEINKNECHT OF THE Oberquartiermeister of the Befehlsstelle Süd of the Generalquartiermeister then confirmed in a report that the scheduled and special winter equipment had been placed in Eisenhaltigen in the Generalgouvernement supplies at the beginning of September 1941.

Some units, such as the 7th Infantry Division, recognized that something was wrong, but did not act with the necessary consistency. For example, on August 28, when the division was still 550 kilometers from Moscow, it wrote that it was up to the troop units to independently supply the winter clothing and equipment left behind in the quarters of the Generalgouvernement. Inexplicably, however, it said: <sup>3</sup> "It is not possible to make up for it with division funds." Apparently, there were more important things to do!

On November 1, 1941, HITLER sought out an exhibition of General WAGNER'S winter clothing at his office. The latter explained Catastrophic - failures in planning and supplies meant that the German Wehrmacht was not equipped for a winter campaign in Russia.

Rags had to be used for protection from the frost.

OLBRICHT'S biography compared specimens of Russian and Finnish winter equipment, developed their own, and an exhibition of possible winter clothing had been organized. <sup>1</sup> HITLER was invited, but did not appear. The winter clothing had then been sent to Berchtesgaden and a decision had been urgently requested from the OKW (High Command of the Wehrmacht) in order to gain time for orders, production, distribution and the like. Only when it was too late had the General Army Office received the answer from KEITEL, STATING that by the beginning of the cold season the campaign in the East would be over and therefore winter clothing should only be provided for 1.2 million occupation troops. However, this had arrived just as little from when the Russian winter came.

<sup>1</sup> These were probably remnants from the Winter War in Finland in 1940.

In fact, Generalquartiermeister Eduard WAGNER had already held a meeting on July 29, 1941, to provide winter clothing for the troops. <sup>2</sup> Richard SCHULZE-KOSSENS, then Adolf HITLER's personal adjutant, wrote to Dr. Henry PICKER on May 12, 1976, that one of his first official acts at the Führer's headquarters had been to attend the presentation of the winter equipment by the Quartermaster General on October 26, 1941. WAGNER had reported "that everything was well arranged" because HITLER, according to SCHULZE-KOSSENS, HAD already ordered in the summer to make conscientious preparations for the winter service. WAGNER, he said, had even given exact figures at the demonstration as to the number of winter clothing that could be provided to the individual army groups. Lieutenant General WEINKNECHT OF THE Oberquartiermeister of the Befehlsstelle Süd of the Generalquartiermeister then confirmed in a report that the scheduled and special winter equipment had been placed in Eisenhaltigen in the Generalgouvernement supplies at the beginning of September 1941.

Some units, such as the 7th Infantry Division, recognized that something was wrong, but did not act with the necessary consistency. For example, on August 28, when the division was still 550 kilometers from Moscow, it wrote that it was up to the troop units to independently supply the winter clothing and equipment left behind in the quarters of the Generalgouvernement. Inexplicably, however, it said: <sup>3</sup> "It is not possible to make up for it with division funds." Apparently, there were more important things to do!

On November 1, 1941, HITLER sought out an exhibition of General WAGNER'S winter clothing at his office. The latter explained Catastrophic - failures in planning and supplies meant that the German Wehrmacht was not equipped for a winter campaign in Russia.

Rags had to be used for protection from the frost.

Often German soldiers (here members of the division > Das Reich<>) used bed sheets as winter camouflage

P  
a  
p  
er  
h  
e  
a  
d  
c  
o  
v  
er  
s  
as  
e  
m  
er  
g  
e  
n  
c  
y  
m  
e  
as  
ur  
es  
!

Such fur coats were worn  
on the Eastern Front in  
1941, but only in the  
Luftwaffe (left)  
and Gebirgsjägern (right)!

This >Windblouse 38< was  
already in 1940Gebirgsjägern

Some troop units their  
own initiative winter  
clothing manufactured oc-  
cupied Russia from  
existing national  
materials

The > Windblouse 1941 < was -  
produced too late due to  
WAGNER'S failure or stalling  
tactics. All illustrations on this  
double page from: Vincent SLE-  
GERS, *Winter uniforms of the  
Germany Army and Luftwaffe  
in World War II*, Lower Valley  
Road, o. j. ode^^ureich  
could do justice. Desperate  
German troop units  
therefore tried on their  
own initiative to have  
winter clothing made in  
sewing rooms and  
factories occupied  
Russia from existing  
national materials. All this  
could more than a drop in  
the

Interestingly, the German leadership had not been informed of these  
untenable conditions! Everything came out when on December 20, 1941,  
Colonel General GUDERIAN, the commander-in-chief of the 2nd Panzer Army,  
flew to the Fuehrer's headquarters to describe to HITLER the increasingly  
threatening situation at Army Group Center. Here he also pointed out that  
the troops still had no winter clothing. HITLER was appalled by this and did not  
want to believe it. He replied that the quartermaster general of the OKH,  
General der Artillerie WAGNER, had reported to him that the winter  
clothing had been assigned. Asked for an explanation, WAGNER had to -  
confirm GUDERIAN'S statement. The winter clothing, WAGNER now admitted,  
had been standing for weeks at railroad stations in Warsaw and had not been  
forwarded.<sup>1,2</sup>

After several strange incidents had been reported to him during the transfer of reinforcements to the Eastern Front from France, on January 1, 1942, HITLER withdrew all railroad operations in the East from General GERCKE, the head of Wehrmacht transport, and transferred them to the Reich Minister of Transport. Immediately, supplies began rolling again, but arrived much too late for winter clothing not until March 1942 that substantial parts of the equipment were to arrive with the troops at the front.

It is therefore not surprising that there was open talk of sabotage on the Eastern Front. Lieutenant General WEINKNECHT's report stated that "the frostbite of the winter of 1941/1942 had been blamed on the lack of foresight of the Quartermaster General.

Thus, "Unternehmen Barbarossa" on the Eastern Front also failed because German soldiers simply froze to death in the ice and snow due to lack of or inadequate winter equipment. More than 133,000 cases of frostbite weakened the German front.<sup>3</sup>

The fact is that due to these omissions and other hair-raising mistakes, - more German soldiers died like this in the winter of 1941/42 than by enemy action.

All too many high officers later hid their complicity behind the legend of "General Winter".<sup>4</sup>

Due to the bad experiences with the available German winter clothing, the next step was to finally improve the quality of the winter equipment. This, too, had to be done against the will of the responsible army officers shown below

### **Winter uniforms in the desert sand: to Africa they could be delivered...**

The highest art of sabotage seems to be achieved when one action succeeds in damaging the soldiers on two fronts at once.

In December 1941, ROMMEL's Afrika Korps had been pushed back to the Gulf of Sidra. Supply deliveries by sea had resulted in such large sinking losses by British submarines and aircraft that air transport and especially the delivery of urgently needed equipment - became increasingly vital to ROMMEL's existence.

This situation was now complicated by the fact that sufficient airlift space was simply not available and could hardly be drawn from other fronts

With typical improvisational skills, two air transport groups could nevertheless be assembled, followed by two more air transport squadrons

Dangerous resupply flights were then made from Sicily, southern Italy and Crete, during which young and inexperienced crews suffered heavy losses. On the return flight, wounded soldiers as well as civilians were then flown out to Italy and Greece. <sup>1</sup>

However, German transport pilots reported in the postwar period that winter uniforms had among their transport cargo for Africa <sup>2</sup>

While their comrades on the Eastern Front froze to death in the Russian ice without this protective equipment, the German transport pilots had to risk their lives to ferry this potentially life-saving equipment away from its actual destination across the sea into the desert, while ammunition and food left behind at the airfields

A pilot who survived the risky resupply flights to Africa with Ju 52s and later Me 323s despite three emergency landings in the sea then also reported numerous other cases of sabotage besides the winter uniforms. But this is another topic.

Clear from this that certain gentlemen in authority not only delayed the manufacture of German winter equipment and prevented its timely delivery to their freezing comrades in the East, but at the same time made the survival of the Afrika Korps more difficult by misdirecting these scarce goods to Africa

### **How to prevent the introduction of the climate membrane wind uniforms**

It will probably never be known exactly how many German soldiers had to die in the East due to lack of winter equipment in the winter of 1941/42. Urgent remedy was necessary!

In January 1942, Fritz TODT, then German Minister of Armaments, therefore discussed the disastrous conditions of the German Wehrmacht in the Russian winter with the young industrialist Josef NECKERMANN. <sup>1</sup>

Josef NECKERMANN then immediately developed a concept for a new type of winter uniform that was nevertheless easy to manufacture. For its development and introduction, a >Frost Commission< was created under the leadership of the textile manufacturer Hans Kehrl. It was headed by the textile manufacturer Hans KEHRL.

First, a kind of market research was conducted with front-line soldiers according to their needs and extensive tests were arranged. Russian booty winter uniforms padded Russian winter uniforms admired by German soldiers in the winter of 1941 were warm, but still did not satisfy all needs.



A special fabric was therefore required that was resistant to cold, wind, rain and snow. At the same time, the new material had to be producible within a very short time. Then the chemist Prof. Walther KLINGSÖHR - came up with the idea of impregnating the substitute material, rayon, with a weatherproof protective layer called Opanol. Opanol can be regarded with a clear conscience as the forerunner of today's Gore Tex, combining weather resistance and windproofness with breathability. The new fabric withstood cold chambers down to minus 50 degrees without breaking.

Double-sided impregnated, the uniforms were also reversible, between field gray and white. Thus, they could be dressed accordingly depending on the situation at the place of action.

The well-known fashion designer James CLOPPENBURG from Hamburg, actually creator of clothing for high society, added smart details to the new German winter uniform, such as that buttons are replaced by

cords and toggles were replaced. This made it easy to open and close uniform even with clammy fingers and thick gloves

In addition to the Opanol jacket and pants, appropriate gloves and headgear were redesigned

Already at the end of January 1942, the first sample collection of the Opanol winter uniform was in front-line trials in Karelia with a 55-company. Josef NECKERMANN personally flew to Karelia to evaluate the soldiers' experiences on the spot. Since more changes had to be made than originally planned, NECKERMANN WAS not able to fly - with Minister TODT to HITLER IN THE Wolfsschanze in East Prussia on February 8, 1942, as planned. This may have saved NECKERMANN's life, because the plane he was to be on with TODT crashed under mysterious circumstances on the return flight. We will go into this further below.

The amazing thing about the development of the new winter uniforms was that NECKERMANN and TODT had to do this in secrecy from the Wehrmacht. NECKERMANN had therefore also selected an SS unit for troop testing of the sensational winter clothing. Nevertheless, the General Army Office learned of the work on the new winter uniforms through a leak and reacted immediately. One night, Josef NECKERMANN was visited by military police in his company office in Berlin's Utrechterstrasse. Although NECKERMANN was considered unavailable, they had an immediate draft notice in their pocket. Without delay, he was taken by bucket truck to a Wehrmacht barracks to begin his military service. The major in charge told NECKERMANN THAT he could see that NECKERMANN was indispensable. However, he was acting on instructions from "the highest authorities," and he would have to give a report today on the conscription that had been carried out. A sergeant said that Mr. NECKERMANN certainly had a particularly good friend sitting upstairs.

This means that the aim here was clearly to delay or, if possible, even prevent the introduction of the wind- and waterproof winter uniforms. Fortunately, NECKERMANN's secretary managed to inform high-ranking friends of her boss. On the instructions of Albert SPEER, Fritz TODT's successor as Reich Armaments Minister, NECKERMANN was released from the Wehrmacht within hours.

The work could continue. Thus it was possible to prepare the new winter uniforms for presentation at the Führer's headquarters in Wolfsschanze on 20.

*Left:* HITLER and Generalquartiermeister WAGNER at the demonstration of the new Opanol winter uniforms on April 20, 1942. WAGNER does not look very satisfied in the photograph. *Right:* NECKERMANN'S >Winter suit 1942<, here in the Luftwaffe wind tunnel. The test subjects easily withstood -50 degrees Celsius and an average wind speed of 135 km/h. From: Vincent SLEIGERS, *Winter uniforms of the German Army and Luftwaffe in World War II*, Lower Valley Road, o. J.

April 1942 to mark the Führer's 53rd birthday. The idea came from Albert SPEER. THE IDEA WAS to give HITLER two presents to revive him: in the morning the new winter uniforms and in the afternoon the new super tank type >Tiger<. Both were to give the Eastern Front new hope for a possible happy outcome of the campaign. At the same time, the Reichsbahn wanted to discuss with HITLER THE final solution to the European transportation problem: the broad-gauge railroad, a project that even today seems modern.

Although some military officers were reluctant to attend the uniform demonstration, HmER was convinced by the new climate membrane uniforms and they were ready to go. Army, Air Force and SS, all should now get the new uniforms as soon as possible

Opanol clothing at that time was without counterpart in the world!

Following HITLER's approval, 2.5 million winter uniforms now had to be in the Wehrmacht camps by the end of August 1942,

"I stuck my neck out for that," NECKERMANN wrote in the postwar period.

According to their own words, countless soldiers owed their survival to these new winter uniforms. fact is that it was the wearers of the Opanol uniforms survived Russian captivity after Stalingrad or later the death camps of the Americans near Remagen after the German surrender. A grateful soldier wrote to NECKERMANN in the post-war period: "We lay with about **300000** soldiers in the infamous Remagen camp. In the open field, in the mud. Heat during the day, ground frost at night, and rain in between. I had to experience how some comrades died of hypothermia because they were less well protected than I was. My camouflage suit gave me comfortable outside shielding"

However, especially in Stalingrad, probably more than **6000** of **90 000** captured soldiers of the former German **6th** Army could have - returned. For although an Opanol uniform was ready for every German uniform wearer before the onset of winter **42/43** it happened that a considerable part did not reach their recipients at the front. Instead, as Josef NECKERMANN explained with concern, countless uniforms - remained in intermediate storage at the central offices, some even in Berlin. Obviously HITLER was lied to again! A special Fuehrer order had in fact demanded that the prescribed winter clothing had to be in the hands of the troops by October **10, 1942**.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas VESZEUTS, author of a critical biography of the NECKERMANN family and himself unsuspicious of any sympathy for the Third Reich, speaks in this context not only of wrangling over competence and other incapacities on the part of the responsible German agencies, but of open sabotage that prevented the finished new winter uniforms from being forwarded to the front.

### **Why Hitler failed before Moscow: It was not only the weather!**

As late as October **16, 1941**, it looked as if Moscow was on the verge of collapse. The city's subways stopped running, and many factories suddenly closed. On the evening of that same day, a special train was made available at Moscow's Kazan station. STAUN and the Russian government were about to leave the city! Stefan MIKOYAN remembered that STAUN, when everything was already ready

had actually appeared at the station, walked along the platform and was already about to board. Then he had suddenly stopped, turned around, and said to Foreign Minister MOLOTOV and Russian Trade Minister

Anastas MIKOYAN, "Go, you, go, you two - I'm going to stay here a little longer." MIKOYAN had then replied, "If you stay, I will stay, too." Thereupon, he said, they all returned to the Kremlin. <sup>1</sup>

Within a very short time something like a miracle happened from then on. <sup>2</sup> If one now summarizes the development on the German side, how from October 1941 an almost certain offensive could run into a bitter defeat, the following main weaknesses became apparent:

- the complete lack of reserves at the operational level, combined with the withdrawal of troops and aircraft to other fronts,
- the misjudgment of the enemy's forces by >failure< of the intelligence services,
- high casualties, which were concealed from the top leadership, -a totally inadequate transport performance of the resupply services,
- an almost complete lack of winter equipment for personnel and materials.

Even the seemingly superhuman performance of the German soldiers was of little use. Strange circumstances and not only the Russian winter knocked the tangible victory before Moscow out of their hands would probably have deterred even the USA from entering the war

### **The threatening strangulation of >Heeresgruppe Mitte< and the disaster of troop transports to Vitebsk and Velikiye Luki**

When on February 2, 1942, the news arrived that Red Army units were already in the area close to Vitebsk, the situation had become a deadly threat for >Heeresgruppe Mitte<.

railroad line via Vitebsk to Smolensk was one of the two lifelines on which the existence of all units of Army Group Center depended. Therefore, the enemy advance had to be stopped under all >circumstances< left of the 9th Army there was a wide gap to >Heeresgruppe Nord<.

As a substitute, the LIXth Army Corps, previously in France, under Gen. Army Corps under General of Infantry of THE CHEVALLERIE WAS thrown to the dangers. <sup>1</sup>

It was about a 200 wide space that did not have either the command means necessary to command a corps.

Eventually, the 330th as well as the 205th Infantry Division were deployed as

firefighters

Incredibly, however, both infantry divisions had to enter the fight without the bulk of their artillery!

In spite of the many radio messages from the 205th Infantry Division concerning its divisional artillery and the message from the 3rd Panzer Army to >Heeresgruppe Mitte<, nothing was initiated from there

This omission cannot be explained by any railroad emergency -more than the situation of the 205th Infantry Division, where artillery units were not brought up by land march and horse-drawn train until the battle was long

But this was not enough, because >Heeresgruppe Mitte< also took away from the 3rd Panzer Army the infantry regiment 358 of the 205th Infantry Division, which had just arrived, in order to transfer it "at the disposal of Heeresgruppe Mitte" to the area northwest of Smolensk. It is unbelievable that an entire Army Group should be dependent on this one regiment.

This can only be described as nonsense, unless something worse was behind it

In spite of everything, both divisions managed, with self-sacrifice, to avert the imminent danger of strangulation of >Heeresgruppe Mitte< by early March 1942.

Was this even >desired<?

Repeated justified requests for the supply of tanks and artillery were rejected each time by >Heeresgruppe Mitte<.

It was not until the end of March, when everything had already run its course, that reinforcements arrived from "Heeresgruppe Mitte" together with the artillery of the divisions

Thus a continuous front could be formed, which altogether held out there until the summer of 1943

However, the 205th Infantry Division as well as the 330th Infantry Division were shattered by the end of this battle.

In this context, Franz KUROWSKI recalled that, for example, the then Colonel General BECK had declared that there was no need for an assassination attempt on the Führer because "everything could be settled at the front". A collapse of the same was imminent.

Should the strangulation of >Heeresgruppe Mitte< initiate this collapse and mean the end of the Eastern campaign?

This gives the impression that, in addition to those responsible for transport and supplies, certain officers of "Heeresgruppe Mitte" had little interest in the continued existence of their own army group

After the situation was stabilized again in March 1942, "Heeresgruppe Mitte" continued to exist until the summer of 1944. The circumstances that led to its demise will occupy us in a subsequent volume

## 9. Chapter

**Betrayal behind the "dark glasses" < -What was  
behind the "inexplicable  
defeats" of German intelligence  
and counterintelligence?**



**Germany's own intelligence chief worked for the enemy:  
Admiral Canaris informed Western Allies and Russians  
about Germany's plans as early as 1940**

<b>Goering</b>		Detective
Skimmed Source		Director
		Nebe

In the documents of the U.S. intelligence agency OSS, Admiral CANAM's defense is listed under the code name Organization 659<. Sometimes the Americans referred to Admiral CANARIS personally by >659<. The OSS was aware that the Abwehr controlled most of the foreign contacts of the German opposition. Their participation in any action was considered a recommendation, as it were<sup>1</sup>

Admiral CANARIS introduced a large circle of people to the Western powers or helped them to establish useful contacts with foreign representatives. At the same time, the admiral helped the Western Allied intelligence services OSS and MI-5 to gain access to circles in the Third Reich that possessed a certain weight but needed to be stimulated from the outside to move from word to deed.

Among the most famous names of the more than thirty personalities who carried out the orders of the German intelligence chief or used his services were Helmuth James VON MOLTKE, Hans VON DOHNANYI, Dietrich BONHOEFFER and Josef MÜLLER. The other German secret services, SD and Gestapo, knew that vital state secrets were leaking, but rarely penetrated to the leakers, the specific executors and their backers. This shows how brilliantly the conspiracy worked.

On December 18, 1940, HITLER had signed his directive "No. 21" It was classified as a "secret matter of command" and existed in only nine copies. One of them was given to Admiral CANAMS.<sup>2,3</sup>

Already one week later this famous secret command was known to the English Intelligence Service. We know today that the English Prime Minister Winston CHURCHILL, WHO WAS immediately informed of this, - wrote a personal letter to STAUN TO warn him of the danger. In his secret report of February 25, 1956, before the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR, Nikita KHRUSHCHEV was to declare, "CHURCHILL has several times pointed to an imminent attack by the Third Reich on the Soviet Union. But STAUN no attention to these warnings." We have addressed elsewhere whether this was really so.

Admiral CANARIS also had the English warn the Vatican, through his emissary MÜLLER, OF an imminent invasion of Russia.

220  
Fri  
edr  
ich  
Ge  
org  
■  
Bet  
ray  
al  
on  
the  
Eas  
ter  
n  
Fro  
nt -  
Th  
e  
Los  
t  
Vic  
tor  
y



warn and sent his personal defense agent, Nikolaus VON HALEM, once again directly to Moscow. HALEM WAS traveling as a businessman and made contact in a hotel with an Englishman with whom he was acquainted. CANARIS, however, was not prepared to warn the Russians directly.

### **The secret of Soviet industrial espionage**

Long before the outbreak of war, the Soviet Union, like the USA, was engaged in extensive industrial espionage in the Third Reich. Even before HITLER CAME TO power, the foreign service INO of the Russian secret police had laid the foundation for such a Trojan horse with the >RabKor movement<. Initially, only >abuses from capitalist enterprises< were to be reported to the headquarters. With this, the Soviet Union primarily wanted to denounce alleged capitalist exuberance

This gave rise to classic economic espionage, which first ran through the Soviet trade mission. It got its information from agents like Robert UHRIG. UHRIG SUCCEEDED installing confidants in a large number of armaments factories. He was supported by Beppo RÖMER. RÖMER, in addition to his espionage activities for the Soviets, maintained close social relations with circles of top military officers. Among them were Field Marshal Wilhelm LIST and Colonel General Eduard DIETL, as well as Kurt VON HAMMERSTEIN, who, in contrast to the former two greats of recent military history, harbored sympathies for the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

The end came for the UHRIG group at the beginning of 1942. UHRIG - was arrested together with about 200 other people. It took the Gestapo and the judiciary two years to unravel the connections. It then turned out that Soviet armaments espionage had been carried out on a grand scale, especially from 1940 onward.<sup>2</sup>

This partly explains the incidents described earlier, where the Russian purchasing missions seemed to know >everything<. The Russians also received important information through their Gestapo agent Willy LEHMANN (code name >Breitenbach<). Breitenbach knew how to arrange it within the scope of his versatile activities at the end of the thirties in such a way that he was also charged with advising the armaments industry on espionage protection. This opened a new, unbelievable access into the most secret areas of the German armament

From Breitenbach the Soviets learned for the first time about the rocket construction program Wernher VON BRAUNS. In 1942, - BREITENBACH was also uncovered and arrested during the search for

members of the >Rote Kapelle<.

Nevertheless, the Russians remained well informed about Germany's industrial secrets from other sources until the end of the war - up to the nuclear tests of March 1945!

### **The failure of the German defense in Finland**

In the spring of 1941, the German Abwehr in Finland had set up a war organization (KO) under the direction of Frigate Captain Alexander CELLARIUS, which ran under the name >Büro Cellarius< at Hapag.

From the beginning, the Finnish branch of the Abwehr showed the same incompetence as the headquarters in the German motherland. According to the field intelligence officer Jukka MÄKEE-LÄ, the Germans were unable to translate Finland's extensive file material on the Red Army from the Finnish language into German.

Even when the Finns cracked the Soviet field post number key, the Germans waved it off, as they did at the possibility of deciphering production digits with which each individual Soviet tank was marked.

To this day, it is equally disputed whether the Finns shared with the German Abwehr their knowledge of the German opposition gained from deciphered American radio messages. Even the directories with clear names of German resisters were included. If so, CANAMS >accidentally< - reported nothing further.

Even when contradictory reports from Helsinki and the Finnish Army Headquarters arrived in Germany in the spring of 1944, the Abwehr under Alexander CELLAMUS did not react to them. They could have been recognized in time that Finland was planning to withdraw from the Second World War. Did they want to gain or pass on decisive intelligence at all?

Alexander CELLAMUS, worked for the Abwehr not only in Finland but also in Sweden, then left Finland in September 1944.

Fortunately for the German Lapland Army in Finland, Finland's exit from the war did not have the same dire consequences as it did for Germany's soldiers in Romania when the latter changed sides. The Lapland Army was able to withdraw from Finland in an orderly fashion and without major losses. The fact that it was only very symbolically opposed by its former Finnish allies during its long retreat may also have helped.

Frigate Captain CELLAWS went to the Usedom Peninsula after

Finland left the war, where he established a new wartime organization in Finland called Sonderkommando Nord. After a short imprisonment, he was released from Allied captivity on November 2, 1946.

### **Was there a systematic failure to evaluate prey records?**

In 1941, another important first-hand source was added German side, in addition to espionage, radio reconnaissance, aerial photographs, and prisoner interrogation.

In fact, an incredible amount of original documents, plans and files had fallen into the hands of German troops during their stormy advance gates of Moscow. In their haste to escape the Wehrmacht, the previous Russian owners had left them still in the armored cabinets, or the papers had been captured in abandoned trucks during the retreat in the Kessel battles.

A prompt and expert evaluation of these valuable original documents would have been of the greatest advantage in view of the low level of German knowledge about STALIN'S empire. Here, too, things were to turn out differently.

If the German troops did not decipher the captured documents themselves or had them translated with the help of interpreters, most of them passed on Army High Command. There, a loot collection center had been set up, which was located in Angerburg in East Prussia at the turn of the year 1941/42. It was headed by a lieutenant named DIETZ, who - what a coincidence - did not understand a word of Russian! Thus it came about that in the first half of the Eastern campaign the captured Russian secret papers were only stored, but not evaluated<sup>1</sup>.

It was not until the turn of the year that some Baltic German officers were sent to Angerburg to begin sifting through and evaluating the valuable booty. There would have been enough Russian-speaking personnel in the German Wehrmacht - if they had wanted to.

However, the booty collection center at the Army High Command was not allowed to carry out its work undisturbed for long. Soon for obscure reasons, it was subordinated to Group III of the Division >Foreign Armies East<. Head of this group was the Baltic German officer Alexis VON ROENNE. Colonel VON DER ROENNE, who belonged to the Resistance, remained ruler over the further evaluation and appraisal of the loot documents until March 1, 1943. Thus, the resistance had control over the transfer of important Russian looted documents up to their

falsification or misappropriation.

After that, VON DER ROENNE became chief of the department >Foreign Armies West< in place of the capable Colonel Ulrich LIST - again one of these >incidents<! At this post, the highly esteemed staff member of his former boss General GEHLEN remained chief of German enemy reconnaissance until the Allied invasion in Normandy. Through deliberate false reports and exaggerations, he contributed significantly to the success of the Anglo-American invasion. <sup>1</sup> After July 20, 1944, VON DER ROENNE was unmasked and later shot.

Against this background posterity will probably never know what secrets were hidden behind the unevaluated Russian loot documents

### **Leap to doom: The Tragic Fate of the Parachute Agents and Abwehr Special Commands**

It was not only the Americans, the British and the Russians who used - parachute agents and airdropped task forces **during** World War II. Germans in particular were among the pioneers of secret air missions

For the Eastern Front, the command staff >Walli< existed in Nikolaiken, East Prussia >Walli< was in close local contact with the Führer's headquarters >Wolfsschanze< and the headquarters of the General Staff >Anna<

Initially, Admiral CANARIS' Abwehr had a special squadron of six planes available for the use of sabotage squads. Four of them were stationed at Rangsdorf near Berlin and two at Angerburg (East Prussia). In addition, there were close links with >Geschwader Rowehl<. <sup>2,3</sup>

Few know that the Luftwaffe's secret reconnaissance unit flew agent missions in addition to aerial. The >Rowehl< group, under its real name Aufklärungsgruppe des Oberbe-

The Luftwaffe's Chief of Air Staff, the "Mischief of the Air Force," was directly subordinate to the Luftwaffe Staff. The Luftwaffe was quite tricky when it came to agent missions. To make sure that these missions were not conspicuous, captured aircraft with German license plates also used in hope that easier to deceive the enemy's flight detection service. The engine noise of >country-specific< engines was also supposed to make it easier to avoid detection. In the case of the Eastern Front, several ex-Russian SB-2s (or their Czech licensed Avia B-71) have thus become known. As late as 1944, at least two SB-2s could be traced to Rangsdorf. Further missions were carried out with captured Po-2 biplanes.

After the successful missions at the beginning of the Eastern campaign, suddenly nothing seemed to work at >Walli<: The parachuted agents and special commandos did not report anymore. Someone or something seemed to have a hand in this, to the detriment of >Walli< and his agents, who were dropped off somewhere in the vastness of Russia. Also agent transport planes disappeared without a trace.

The first response came from liaison V 212 of Abwehr 1. He brought the news that Group 19 B, which had been dropped south of Orel, was already expected by the enemy and had been destroyed down to the last man.

By then, 63 paratroopers had been dropped in 5 groups, none had responded. Another Abwehr 1 report from Japanese sources said that the 40 agents dropped off outside Vladivostok, who had the task of mixing pieces of coal prepared in Berlin-Tegel with the ship's coal in the port of Vladivostok, had been picked up a day later by a large-scale organized search operation. The search operation could only have come about through treachery.

In the end, twelve >Walli< ventures had failed, of which two failures were resolved.

Effective immediately, Abwehr 2 had to issue a freeze on all further

Flight to doom? Launch of a Polikarpov Po-2 with two Brandenburgers! in civilian clothes for landing behind Soviet lines. What good was even the retention of the original Russian livery if the mission was betrayed?

commando operations.

The man who is suspected today of having betrayed these missions was called Oberleutnant GOLLNOW. THE latter betrayed for sex with the married agent Mildred HARNACK under the eyes of her husband Arvid HARNACK (code name >Korsikanez<) all i^rn available details about sabotage missions of Abwehr 2 on the Eastern Front of the year 1942.

As the parachute sorties and casualty reports, a drop specialist familiar with the tec^ük of parachute jumping was requested from the Luftwaffe High Command He was to supervise the preparation and durc^^mng of the measures to be taken for the parachute jump. The Soviet agent Harro SCHULZE-BOYSEN succeeded in the incredible feat of infiltrating First Lieutenant GOLLNOW INTO this position as well. Thus the >Rote Kapelle< learned in a double way about the secret operations of the German parachute agents and Sonderkommandos. The secrets which GOLLNOW delivered to Mrs. HARNACK were then delivered by SCHULZE-BOYSEN in radio messages to Moscow via Brussels. Later, GOLLNOW became a conscioussource, although he himself realized what had become of the agent who had committed treason in his vows of love.

After the uncovering of the >Red Chapel< also First Lieutenant GOLLNOW came before the Reich War Court at the end of 1942 and was sentenced to death. On the day of the surrender of Stalingrad HITLER confirmed the sentence.

The question is, however, whether GOLLNOW acted alone. New sources, such as Helmut ROEWER, a former official at the Federal Ministry of the Interior's Office for the Protection of the Constitution, - then question this as well. According to them, the problem was to let explosive news about the upcoming agent operations flow immediately to Moscow<sup>1</sup> This had rarely been the case because of the radio problems of the >Rote Kapelle< in the summer of **1942**.

In fact, later, after the elimination of the >Red Kapelle<, there continued to be numerous missions of German parachute agents and special commandos after jumping off, were already awaited on the ground by the obviously pre-informed enemy This happened not only in Russia, but also in Afghanistan, England, Africa and Iraq.

For Admiral CANAMS it was therefore an ideal opportunity to make the >Red Kapelle< the scapegoat for all grievances on the occasion of the trial. According to the trial testimony of Admiral CANAMS, 23 airplanes used for the transport of parachutists alone, which did not return, came -



on the account of the traitors of the >Red Chapel<.

Certainly GOLLNOW committed treason. But who supplied precise data about planned missions of the German parachute agents and special commandos to Russia, except in the fastest way is unexplained

### **The sabotage of the radio bearings**

Radio direction finding was the scare word of all agent transmitters! As early as in the thirties of the **20th** century, it was indeed possible to determine the exact location of a transmitter by means of direction finding of the radio signal and to blow up the troublemaker.

Until the beginning of the Second World War, there was no radio defense in the military sense in Germany. Only for the control of amateur transmitters and to detect unauthorized communications by radio, there were individual radio measuring devices of the order police. At that time, it was only a matter of internal order and security. Apparently, until the beginning of the Second World War, Germany had not expected the appearance of radio agents. However, since enemy agents had been radioing their messages from the Reich since **1937**, there was a gap here, the closing of which was not tackled until March **1940**. **Since May 1941**, the number of detected agent transmitters had exploded. HrrLER therefore gave Admiral CANAMS THE responsibility to "put an end to this spook in the ether".<sup>2</sup>

Little happened, however - as with so much that CANARIS was to initiate. was not until a few months after the start of the Eastern campaign that a conference of the technical group and specialist units concerned with clearing up the spy radio agent case >330<Cranz on November 4, 1941. At this meeting, General FELLGIEBEL, Chief of Wehrmacht Intelligence Liaison and, in personal union, Chief of Army Intelligence, issued the following order: "The transmitter is to be found in 14 days. Do you understand me?"<sup>1</sup>

Typical FELLGIEBEL talk, since there was not just one, but dozens of them!

All enemy agent stations were to be monitored day and night from now on, for traffic habits, call times, and frequencies. Two years had been missed since the beginning of the war.

The Wehrmacht was now working flat out on the construction of the radio monitoring organizations. According to a Fuehrer order issued in 1941 activities of the Wehrmacht, the Ordnungspolizei and the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office) could finally

be ordered to some extent. However, according to the order, General - FELLGIEBEL was in charge through the OKW - the consequences were soon apparent. \_

Just two months after the Craz meeting, the Wehrmacht had two complete radio monitoring companies and a fixed radio monitoring station at Kjoge, Denmark, while a punk monitoring platoon was in formation. The third radio surveillance company was used on the Eastern Front against partisan radio. The Luftwaffe had a squadron of Fi-156 Storch aircraft. This had twelve aircraft with direction finding equipment. In addition, the Luftwaffe already had a radio surveillance company at that time, while the Ordnance Police had seven fixed radio measuring stations and four near-field direction-finding units. Radio monitoring stations and direction finding platoons were stationed at Melun, Brussels, Toulouse, Belgrade, Athens, Sofia, Craz, as well as monitoring stations at Hannover, Langenargen, Brest, Belgrade, Reval, Riga, Lviv, Odessa, Varna, Milan, and Sicily. Other remote direction finders existed in Brussels, Paris, Bordeaux and at other locations in Norway, Lithuania, Denmark, Romania, Poland and southern France.

Organizationally, everything now seemed to be in perfect order, but next there were "technical problems" of the worst kind.

Radio reconnaissance, for example, reported that the large-scale direction finding in the north could not be carried out. It was a laughing matter, but the two Luftwaffe vehicles that had been ordered to Kiel had suddenly appeared in Graudenz. It is being investigated how and in what way this happened. But shaking one's head would get us nowhere; we would have to hit the table with our fists. But it was no use!

Another trial was planned in Harnburg, but the equipment was deployed exactly 48 hours too late.

The unbelievable events did not stop:

The Army Radio Reconnaissance had ordered 12 direction finders, and 6 were promised at very short notice. Time passed. It turned out that after months of waiting, the radios had been delivered to the Air Force, the ones intended for the Army were in a police garage in Paris.

There was a lack of motorized direction finders for shortwave traffic, at least 8 for shortwave and 4 for long-distance direction finders. The devices were promised and delivered to Krakow. From there they were fetched, and when the devices were put into operation in Brussels and Berlin, it turned out that the basic numbers on the capacitors were wrong and that the direction finders worked misaligned by 5 to 7 degrees both in the minimum

and in the maximum.

practice, this meant that a bearing transmitter was never positioned where it should have been according to crosshairs, especially in long-distance bearings and if one took bearings from a different location, the transmitter shifted hundreds of kilometers north or south. It was exasperating, and the first suspicion that the direction finders were amateurs soon proved to be unjustified when it turned out the best men of the four branches of the armed forces had been assigned to the direction finders.

In August 1941, the Abwehr had new, mainly scaled-down, close-range direction finders built. Special listening receivers were made, and the generally used direction finders, huge boxes on trucks, became portable small chest direction finders, 30 x 50 cm in size, with built-in directional antennas. They weighed 4 kg. There were twelve of these devices. They were to be delivered on October 19, 1941. On January 4, 1942, Krakow asked in Berlin what should be done with the boxes that were standing around. There would be straps on them and knobs to turn, but they were not radio receivers. This request came from the site commandant's office. 24 hours later, the equipment was still where it belonged, with the men of the radio surveillance companies.

What good were the  
best direction finders if  
they were set incorrectly  
by the manufacturer?

*Above:* KW near-field  
direction finder Fu  
N.P.Ger, rechargeable  
on airplane and truck.

That's when the large-scale operation was ordered. Four sounding parties arrived. The sounding time in the morning hours had been regular, the enemy station had been approached by 20. Everything was ready for reception. Then the transmitters fell silent. As if on command.

Also during the actions in Berlin for the excavation of the >Rote Kapelle< direction finders were used, which also, as in Brussels, had wrong capacitor positions. Thus, there was no intersection at all after the first sounding attempts had been made. Previously made control bearings in Königswusterhausen had also led to a very strange result. Each of the four receivers used had, although this bearing was a child's work, a different degree position.

In no less than 36 cases, the soundings were either prevented, or deceived, or made more difficult by incorrect base numbers.

Meanwhile, the investigation was going on, but it was running dead.

It was only on July 16, 1942 that it came to light why the Germans' direction finding equipment had failed so mysteriously time and again.

Kriminalrat STEHLING was one of the officers charged with countering enemy agent transmitters. On that day, STERLING had received a report that at about 10 o'clock that morning, Air Force Lieutenant Harro SCHULZE-BOYSEN, suspected of espionage, had met at Berlin's Luisenplatz with a senior engineer who was the responsible head of the direction-finding equipment department of the company entrusted with the design and manufacture of a large part of the direction-finding equipment ordered by the Wehrmacht.

Now the connection with the faulty direction finding equipment of the Telefunken company was clear. Quality of German radio direction finding results reached a very high level after the arrest of these gentlemen.

But this still does not explain the conspicuous errors in the distribution of direction finding equipment. The radio defense under General FELLGIEBEL was responsible for this.

### **Did the >Rote Kapelle< really cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of German soldiers, or was it just an alibi?**

On November 24, 1942, the last chief of the >Red Kapelle< still at liberty was caught in Paris by Sonderkommando 330.

In 16 months of work 81 transmitters were confiscated in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and France, 469 agents, radio operators, couriers, informers and informers were arrested and 2164 radio intercepted, 784 of which could be decoded. 32 trials took place in the above-mentioned occupied countries, 79 of those arrested were sentenced to death, 53 sentences were carried out, 964 years of penitentiary and 312 years of imprisonment put the finishing touches to the >Rote Kapelle< organization.<sup>1</sup>

The term >Rote Kapelle< is a ke^ign coined by the then Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) for the Soviet espionage and subversion networks discovered in Western Europe after the outbreak of the German-Russian War in 1941. The name arose because the >music< of the radio broadcasts had its >pianists< (radio operators), a >chapel master< (the big boss in the area of operations), and its >conductor< (the director) in Moscow. The term >Red Chapel< was originally used only for the clandestine operation launched by Abwehrstelle Belgium (Abwehr III F) in August 1941 against the transmitting stations in Belgium. Since the investigation soon extended from there to Holland, Germany, France, Switzerland and Italy, the term >Rote Kapelle< was then applied to these extended operations as well.

The >Red Chapel< did not come into being only after the outbreak of >Barbarossa<. Testimonies of Soviet officers confirm that Moscow

established the first networks of the >Red Chapel< in Europe already in 1935 and 1936. The areas of operation of the >Red Chapel< involved not only Germany, Belgium, France, Holland, Switzerland, and Italy, but there were also links with similar secret organizations in England, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe (Poland, Romania, Bulgaria), the United States, and Canada. Prior to World War II, the targets of Soviet spy networks in Europe were particularly focused on the United States and England. In early 1940, despite the nonaggression pact between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union still in force at the time, the main target of the >Red Chapel< was redirected to Germany. Before it was crushed by the Germans in 1942, the >Red Chapel< expanded in terms of personnel, technical aspects, and increasingly comprehensive missions to such extent that, at the height of its development, it constituted a formidable espionage enterprise unparalleled to this day.

activities of the >Red Chapel< began in Belgium, which, because of its ideal geographic location and proximity to all other major countries in Western Europe, was a favored base for Soviet espionage operations before World War II.

Viktor SUKHOV, a Soviet intelligence man, visited Berlin in April 1939 on Moscow's instructions to reactivate Harro SCHULZE-BOYSEN as a source. SCHULZE-BOYSEN HAD reportedly previously delivered German agents to the Soviets during the Spanish Civil War. From files of the Soviet intelligence service NKVD it is also said to be certain that SCHULZE-BOYSEN, in his early agent days, informed the Russians through their Berlin embassy that Nazi intelligence in Barcelona was planning to foment an uprising against the Republic with the help of the Trotskyist Spanish >POUM<. The Trotskyist uprising actually took place there, but was ruthlessly crushed by the Communists. From today's perspective, the only thing that seems unclear about this NKVD report is what the Third Reich should have had to do the left-wing anarchists and Trotskyists in Barcelona. What SCHULZE-BOYSEN probably did reveal, however, were details about the Condor Legion, with which Germany decisively supported FRANCO's air force. The later >Rote Kapelle< member was also able to provide his Soviet friends with details about the German transports of weapons and personnel to supply the Spanish nationalists.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, although SCHULZE-BOYSEN had cooperated with Soviet intelligence long before, he was the last of the principal members of the >Red Kapelle< to be formally recruited by HARNAK only in early 1941.

The organization of the >Rote Kapelle< was divided into three parts in Germany: The HARNAK group, the SCHULZE-BOYSEN group, and the

STöBE-SchEL^ group. The HARNAK and Scmn.ZE-BoYSEN groups were so closely linked that they actually formed a single network. The STöBE-SchELiHA group operated independently of the other two.

However, all groups had contacts with >Rote-Kapelle< agents in other countries, especially in Belgium and France.

According to the Gestapo, the German group alone probably had 280 active members. There were probably even more.

The informers of the >Red Kapelle< were in the OKW (High Command of the Wehrmacht) and in the Ministry of Economics as well as in the Organisation TODT, in the Foreign Office, in the Air Force, in the Army and in the Navy.

Reports and information from German industry reached the >Rote Kapelle< whenever the situation demanded it.

The >Rote Kapelle< divided the received material into two groups: into material that was usable for radio transmissions and into other material that had to be eliminated from the outset, if not unsuitable, but nevertheless for various reasons - >fortunately<, because, according to Heinz SCHRÖTER, SCHULZE-BOYSEN said, many a "juicy lump" had been among them. From Berlin, however, the >Rote Kapelle< provided information only about the Eastern Front. Things that concerned the West were a matter for the Western military and had been withheld.

According to an American secret report (published in 1973), the German investigations against the >Rote Kapelle< revealed that Soviet agents also had contacts with high-ranking figures in government offices in Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, and elsewhere.

The case was considered so serious that GÖRING and HIMMLER personally intervened. The organization by the Gestapo and Sonderkommando 330 took place mainly in the second half of August 1942. The operation ended on October 29, 1942, when VON SCHELIHA was hunted down.

Due to a mishap in the investigation, the >Rote Kapelle< member and radio operator HEILMANN became aware of the busting of his group. Therefore, the Germans had to intervene prematurely against the Soviet agents in Berlin. Thus a large number of informers and confidants escaped detection and arrest.

To this day, there is a bitter dispute about the significance of the betrayal of the >Red Chapel< for the war events on the Eastern Front as a whole.

While it was long claimed after the war that the war in the East had been decided by the treason of the >Red Chapel<, there are other opinions, such as that of the head of the Abwehr's >Counterintelligence IIIF< Division. Colonel Joachim ROHLER said after the war that BOYSEN'S treason activities had been

militarily almost insignificant. Modern evaluations such as those by Helmut ROEWER also come to a similar conclusion.

The truth is likely to lie in between. From the betrayal of the German attack date to the exposure of the secret air reconnaissance squadron>Rowehl<, the use of German parachute agents, details about the latest secret weapons, information about the signs of fuel shortages, the construction of a Führer headquarters in Upper Silesia to the Luftwaffe armament, known departure times of British Arctic convoys for Murmansk, the capture of a Russian radio key at Petsamo, the production of synthetic fuels, warnings about German attack intentions and the formation of centers of gravity on the Eastern Front (from the renunciation of the conquest of Leningrad to the German attack plan for 1942 on the Southern Front) - there was almost nothing in the way of German secrets that had not been passed on to the Russians!

The only problem was that due to technical problems and the inability of the >Rote Kapelle< members to operate the radios properly, many messages reached the director in Moscow late. For example, the message that it was not intended to let the German troops attack Moscow Moscow headquarters until decision of late August was long out of date and the German tanks were already close to Moscow

Many of the messages from Berlin (Coro group) were therefore transmitted via >Rote-Kapelle< stations in Belgium and France.

The deciphering of the >Rote-Kapelle< sayings from Belgium and France was only partially possible for the Sonderstab 330, because some encodings could not be solved

But what could be deciphered by the defense agencies had met, not to say exceeded, the feared expectations.

After having deciphered only 126 radio transmissions of the >Rote Kapelle<, which had been sent until the turn of the year 1941 /42, the men of the special staff >330< would have asked themselves, according to the former war correspondent Lieutenant Heinz SCHRÖTER, whether there could be an increase of betrayal at all consideration was made whether it would not be better to ask what had not been betrayed instead of worry about what information the radio transmissions might contain According to SCHRÖTER, there was therefore no great inclination to decode the September and October messages as well.

Thus, the evaluation of the damage objectively done by the activities of the >Rote Kapelle< to the German war effort is difficult to conduct today Luftwaffe Judge Dr. Manfred ROEDER, chairman of the court that tried the >Rote Kapelle< agents, informed, according to U.S. Paper 0/7708, that German counterintelligence had estimated the number of casualties caused by the >Rote Kapelle< in Germany at about 200,000 men.



Admiral CANAMS, WHO, AS is shown elsewhere, had played a very ambiguous role in the unmasking of the >Red Kapelle<, also commented on this. Before the wave of trials against the unmasked Soviet agents began, the Army High Command had been asked for a legal opinion. The OKH had declared itself not responsible and had forwarded this request to the >Abwehr<. Admiral CANARIS saw his chance and informed the rapporteur of the Reich Military Court. The answer to the question what damage had resulted to German people in general and to the German Wehrmacht from treasonous activity of the >Red Kapelle<: "It is of course very difficult to give a clear statement here, but according to the documents available to us and their exact sifting, it can be said with great certainty that those accused of treasonous activity indirectly cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of German soldiers. Germany and unclosed countries 14 submarines and 23 planes used for transporting paratroopers did not return, they come to same account. The material damage is also not to be calculated approximately. The military damage cannot be overlooked at all."

Thus it becomes clear: Even if the >Red Chapel< had certainly betrayed important secrets to the Soviets, it was now to play the ideal >scapegoat< for CANARIS for all oddities and betrayals on the Eastern Front.

Consequently, important parts of the >Abwehr< shared the view that with the elimination of the >Rote Kapelle< treason, viewed broadly, had now been eradicated in Germany and the role of the traitors had been played out forever.

For the leader of Sonderkommando >330<, Major TRAUTMANN, it was absolutely clear that the spiritual center, which ran under the name of >Rote Kapelle<, had been hunted down, but that the informants and informer remained in the dark. And if many years after the events of that time these were estimated in their totality at 4000, Major TRAUTMANN'S estimate of 3000 unrecognized informer after the Kapelle< had come reasonably close to the muhnaßliche truth in 1943. In his opinion, the successes of the months following the dismantling of the >Rote Kapelle< were indeed to be regarded as extremely unsatisfactory.

Abwehr III F was then on the trail of treasonous efforts emanating from 163 Soviet agents still operating on the fringes.

In addition, there were 8 groupings, which in size and scope could well compete with the smashed >Rote Kapelle<. So there was still systematic betrayal, only one could not successfully fight against it!

What were these groups and groupings? To this day, we still do not know many things. What has become known are cases like that of the SAEFKOW group, which remained active until the end of the war despite the successful dismantling of some of its parts.

Although the Soviet agent Harro SCHULZE-BOYSEN is apparently held in such high esteem by sections of West German society that a street was named after him

in Kiel, it is certain that his Berlin group was of secondary importance in relation to the importance of those men who reported secret messages to Switzerland in order to bring about the elimination of HITLER and his government by way of the defeat of Germany.

After 1945, the Americans had taken great pleasure of the >Red Chapel< and the >Red 3< in secret reports 1973, under U.S. President Richard NIXON, the U.S. State Department wrote an overview report on the activities of the >Red Chapel<. In 1977, a photocopy of this explosive document reached Germany.

From the structure and appendices of this document it is perfectly clear that the American editors drew on earlier available elaborations on the >Rote Kapelle< and tried to bring them up

The Americans feared, probably not without reason, that after 1945 the Soviet intelligence service KGB might again be able to recruit men who, as top agents of Eastern intelligence agencies, betrayed crucial U.S. and NATO secrets<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, the Cold War came to an end in 1989, without the need to recalculate how many victims traitors had on their conscience again.

### **Did the >Red Chapel< have a high standing guardian angel?**

Until today it remains a mystery whether the Berlin section of the >Red Chapel< was protected for a long time by a high-ranking personality.

Among other things, the events of December 1941 point to this. On the night of December 13 of that year, a transmitter of the >Red Kapelle< had been excavated in Brussels by Special Staff 330. Important documents of the >Rote Kapelle< together with two Soviet intelligence officers were apprehended. The first break-in into the invisible front of the >Red Kapelle< had succeeded

Immediately on December 13, the head of Abwehrstelle Brussels reported the completion of the operation to Colonel ROHLEDER OF - Admiral CANARI Abwehr. Already one day later it was reported that >Koro< (Korsikanetz or Harro SCHULZE-BOYSEN) knew excavation of the PTX transmitter in Brussels. The number of initiates at that time was conceivably small.

Unfortunately, Heinz SCHRÖTER, author of the report on the treason complex >Geheime Reichssache 330<, did not give us any further information. However, he informed on the cover to his work that minor changes of the material were necessary in some places security

reasons and national political considerations This may have been the case here as well. <sup>2</sup>

Even before the Brussels PTX transmitter went off, there had been direction-finding attempts in Berlin; the operation ran from October 19 to 23 1941. By November 3, 1941, a partial result was available. In five observed houses, 762 persons had been identified by then, of whom 613 had been eliminated with a high degree of certainty. Later it turned out that among the remaining suspected persons were actually members of the >Koro<- (SCHULZE-BOYSEN) or >Arvid<- (HARNAK) and >Arier<-group (SCHELIHA).

This means that already 11 months before the beginning of the wave of arrests in the summer of 1942 the broadcasting stations and the suspected circle of persons of the Berlin >Rote Kapelle< were determined without anything happening!

The background was that in the meantime the >Abwehr< had deciphered the radio transmissions of >Kents< in Brussels on the instructions of Admiral CANAMS, but had not taken care of the Berlin >hot iron<. Again the trace of a >guardian angel< appears.

Then, on July 14, 1942, everything changed, because Special Staff 330 was able to decipher an old radio message from Moscow, which had already been sent from Moscow to Brussels to >KENT< personally on October 10, 1941. This radio message delivered unbelievably not only the names but also the addresses of the Berlin >Rote Kapelle< members literally to . the desk of Special Staff 330.

The deciphering of this radio message had come about after the Special Staff 330 had decided shortly beforehand not to decipher the newly arising radio messages, but the messages of the period September to November 1941.

Already the fifth message deciphered on the basis of this new order in July 1942 brought the sensation - and the end of the grace period for the Berlin group. Now Special Staff 330 could finally take action and, instead of further deciphering of old radio messages, directly tackle the dangerous Berlin spy nest.

The high standing guardian angel at the defense now could not do anything without delivering himself to the knife.

## **>Max< & Co: Why the Russian Counteroffensive was Expected by the German High Command in the Wrong Place**

The Soviet Union's preparations for relief offensives at the end of 1942 could not be hidden from targeted German radio and air reconnaissance therefore essential for the Russians that the German leadership could not put there

The German intelligence chief in the Eastern War, Colonel (ret.) GEHLEN, - persistently claimed that the expected Soviet counteroffensive would take place in the area of >Heeresgruppe Mitte<. Reinhard GEHLEN garnished these reports with Soviet war intentions for 1943, based on reports from agent >Max<. >Max< was a double agent who passed on disguised Soviet disinformation. He worked for Abwehr I and his real name was Alexander DEMJANOW. DEMJANOW was supposed to conduct espionage for the Soviet NKVD in Germany, but was sent down there by the Abwehr under his code name >Max< to Russia, where he parachuted near Yaroslavl in March 1942. There he conducted a radio game for the Russians under the name >Kloster<, with which he was able to deceive the Abwehr I for two years. 23 - deployed German agents were sent to their doom by this radio game. Those who were not executed served as group >Prestol< to get alleged information for agent >Max<.

Incredibly, Colonel GEHLEN apparently based his enemy situation reports solely on this agent's reports.

The agent DEMYANOV was then described by the German Abwehr in July 1942 as a source who had proved to be reliable! This raises, as the intelligence specialist and former president of a constitutional protection agency Helmut ROEWER wrote, more than one question.

It is unclear why nobody should have been able to check the few facts available in the >Max< report for their correctness against other knowledge available in many cases. Colonel Rudolf Graf MAROGNA-REDWITZ was responsible for the mistakes in >Max<. MAROGNA-REDWITZ was in charge of the Abwehrstelle Wien from 1938, where his tasks included Balkan and Soviet espionage. The colonel and count was a close personal friend of Admiral CANARIS and was "in complete agreement with ^rn in his assessment of the situation." <sup>2</sup> When SS- F^er KALTENBRUNNER remarked critically to CANARIS and LAHOUSEN on 22 February 1944 that von MAROGNA-REDWITZ... "maintained relations with members of the Hungarian intelligence service whose pro-England attitude was known to the SD," LAHOUSEN wrote: "CANARIS and I were aware that these accusations were

well-founded and, through the person of our friend, dangerous for the entire Abwehr and the resistance against KTLER.... I must confess that during the last conversation the sweat of fear stood on my forehead. "<sup>3</sup>

Why then, what was really behind it?

Here again the long-range reconnaissance officer PEMLER comes into play. He was repeatedly warned by a >Dr. BARTH< and a >Mr. SOMMER< - about suspicious forces at the Abwehr posts in the southeast, who would promote enemies of the Reich and fight members of the Abwehr not belonging to their own circle to the death.<sup>1</sup>

ROEWER, pointing to PEMLER'S work in disguise, wrote that according to the biographical information penned by MAROGNA's daughter, it was clear that MAROGNA-REDWITZ had been involved with everything else except Soviet Union espionage. He would have devoted himself to helping those persecuted by the system. "This was certainly an important broad field for him, but it was equally different from Russian espionage. The question is whether he wanted to pursue this properly at all; perhaps this would have been forbidden in view of his further fate, he was executed on October 12, 1944, as a co-conspirator in July 20." It is clear what is meant here.

In the fall of 1942, as a confirmation of their disinformation, the Soviet leadership actually allowed the attack announced by >Max< in the central section of the Eastern Front to take place as a sham operation. In doing so, the Russians \_ accepted that their local attack troops would run into the open knife Germans had, as the Soviet reconnaissance had correctly recognized with satisfaction, previously transferred strong reserves to the >Heeresgruppe Mitte<

Then, when the main attack against the Stalingrad front began on - November 22, 1942, the Russians struck against the weakest part of the German southern front.

Already after a few days it was no longer questionable what danger the German Eastern Front was facing at this point.

But again General GEHLEN weakened! He now still judged that the Soviets would not succeed in bringing up the necessary reserves to exploit this initial success.

From today's perspective, one can only wonder why such a constant misjudgment of the operational intentions and possibilities of the enemy did not lead to any official consequences for the person in charge

It is therefore worth looking at what GEHLEN and the >Abwehr< delivered of Soviet attack plans above and beyond the >Max< disinformation.

### **General Gehlen's Big Lie from 1971.**

General Reinhard GEHLEN'S General Staff Department >Foreign Armies East< had not only >overseen< the Russian offensive in the Stalingrad area. General Reinhard GEHLEN, in the post-war period for a long time head of the Federal Intelligence Service (BND), claimed in all seriousness in his memoirs published in 1971 (*Der Dienst*) that HITLER had recklessly disregarded the warnings of other people. Thus, the leader of >Fremde Heere Ost< had been informed several times that the

Russians were preparing an offensive in the south of the Eastern Front; and this had been confirmed several times not only by the head of the Intelligence Department, Major General GEHLEN, but also by General PAULUS, who was fighting in the front line. GEHLEN claimed that on November 12, 1942, he had reported to HITLER that a Soviet attack against the 3rd Romanian Army should be expected soon.

Thus HITLER's role as a warner deceived by the General Staff was twisted into its opposite by GEHLEN in 1971. If GEHLEN's service on the Eastern Front in 1942 really wanted to have recognized the Soviet counterattack before Stalingrad, as GEHLEN claimed, it is permissible to ask why the chief of the >Foreign Armies East< Division then still on November 6, 1942, in a detailed situation assessmentFührer's headquarters, predicted the focal operations of the Russians in the coming winter at >Heeresgruppe Mitte<. <sup>1,2</sup>

### **The time factor: Why was Moscow so quickly informed about the German attack and operation plans?**

There was hardly any military planning and operation from the Führer's headquarterswasnot betrayed with the participation of military circles

The tap-proof defensive telephone linesto Switzerlandmentioned in U.S. document 07/7708 can certainlyexplainonly part of the message leakage of important dates.

However, the fact that the German troops, as at Smolenskfoundtheir own attack and operational plans complete and full-blowneven if they had been submitted to HITLER only two days earlier but not yet decided, implies a faster and, above all, more direct means of transmission.

Unfortunately, US document 07/7008 does not comment on this. <sup>3</sup>

General REMER, combat commander of the Führer's headquarters after July 20, 1944, as well as Henry PICKER can shed light on this.

REMER reported: "Such short-term acts of treason as that of the Bryansk plan, which had been presentedHITLER only two days before, could onlyhave reached the enemy from Hm.ER's closest environmentFurthermore, the German Abwehr under CANARIS and ÜSTER knew that in the summer of 1942 a Soviet secret transmitterhad been dug up near Warsawwhich had radioed several thousand radio messages directly to Moscow.The decoding of all these reports, which were in copies, also revealed a shockingpicture of the extremely effective espionage activities of German backers.This knowledge alone and many other evidencesshouldhave been sufficientforce, as a matter of priority, an investigation of these treasonous and espionage activities of German traitorsToday, one should not be surprised that this did not happen and could not happen at all, because in the top positions of the German Abwehr, the reconnaissance services and the radio and telephone system, there were traitorsand saboteurs who covered themselves up and prevented any factual uncovering

This became clear to me to the full extent only when HIT.ER told me some treasonous offenses under the seal of secrecy when I took up my post as a

combat commandant of the headquarters.

Thus, through the vigilance of an intelligence field sergeant, it was discovered that a special double circuit in the intelligence command bunker of the Fuehrer's headquarters made it possible to listen in on important officer telephone calls of operational and tactical orders and instructions. The eavesdropping took place in Switzerland. In addition, there was a direct switchboard connection to Switzerland. The Führer did not get into further details."

Henry PICKER can add here that this was based on a second connection of the >FHQ-OKW telephone line for operations orders< to Switzerland arranged by General FELLGIEBEL and his three closest associates. Here we have probably the solution of the riddle!

General REMER then reported on others involved: "It did not stop at the arrest and execution of the chief of the intelligence unit, General FELLGIEBEL. Even his closest associates were not only co-conspirators, but most shameful traitors to the country, who made common cause with our enemies. Despite renewed assurances of unwavering loyalty to the Führer personally, FELLGIEBEL's successor, General Fritz THIELE, was caught in the act [i.e., he transmitted messages to Switzerland!? - author's note]. Also executed as accomplices and participants were the Chief of Staff, Colonel HAHN, as well as the Chief of the Office Group of Intelligence at the Commander of the Reserve Army, Colonel HASSEL, who was in charge of the parallel circuit in Berlin."<sup>1, 2</sup>

This makes it clear how the enemy in the east could have known so quickly about German operational intentions. Even before the German commanders at the front received their orders, the Soviets had already read them. Thus it becomes understandable why the Soviets often reacted completely helplessly when the troop commanders on the ground made important decisions about which the Führer's headquarters did not know. Then the treason reports were missing!

### **Why were the Abwehr's telecommunication links at the Führer's headquarters in Vinnitsa never interrupted?**

One of the many oddities surrounding the former Fuehrer headquarters in Vinnitsa (Ukraine) is that the <sup>fe</sup>rmel communications of the Abwehr radio signal head were never interrupted by partisans. The radio communication head of the German Abwehr was located in a castle near the Führer's headquarters. However, its telecommunication links, in the form of a cable as thick as an arm, never cut. Russian partisans, although their and army intelligence turnstiles running nearby, were regularly destroyed.<sup>3</sup>

This was probably not a coincidence! Therefore, there are only the possibilities that this important radio communication was successfully monitored by the Soviet F<sup>u</sup>nkauf-klärung and its contents were read or that the constant functioning of the message connections of the



German Abwehr was important for the Russian warfare, so that the betrayal and sabotage actions of the Allied helpers in the Führer's headquarters could proceed undisturbed and promptly

## **"Continuous glaring failure" or: Was Admiral Canaris almost blown in July 1941?**

The realization that his intelligence service had failed dawned on HITLER as early as July 1941. LAHOUSEN, one of Admiral CANARIS's department chiefs, noted: "CANARIS, who has returned from the Fuehrer's headquarters, reports that the mood there is very nervous, since the Russian campaign - as was becoming increasingly apparent - was not proceeding according to >the rules of the game<. There were increasing signs that the war would not bring internal collapse, as expected, but the strengthening of Bolshevism. Attempts were being made to point to the defense as the culprit, in the sense that it was now claimed that the strength and fighting power of the Russian army had not been adequately informed. Thus the Führer is said to have said that if he had known about the knowledge of the superheavy Russian fighting vehicles, the war would not have been fought."

HITLER explained to HIMMLER: "The Abwehr always presents me with a hodgepodge of individual reports and leaves it to me to pick out what suits me. One must teach people a better way of working. "<sup>1</sup> 2

As early as February 1941, long before the start of the Eastern campaign, HEYDRICH, then head of SS intelligence, told his colleague SCHELLENBERG: "For CANARIS, this is a bad sign must be said that his task as head of military intelligence is very much one of criticism. One can say even more: I am almost certain that CANARIS betrayed the attack date of the Western campaign of May 10, 1940, to the British and the French. Do you still remember the leak at the Vatican? You will tell me that it did not matter and that we nevertheless destroyed the French army and chased the English one off the mainland. And yet this was a case of treason." In response to SCHELLENBERG's question as to why one did not then act immediately, HEYDRICH SAID, "Not immediately. I prefer to wait and collect more documents. Day will come when CANARIS will receive his punishment for all the damage he has done to the regime. "<sup>3</sup> 4

To this day it is a mystery why the SS leaders HIMMLER and HEYDRICH spared Admiral CANARIS for so long. Thus, HIMMLER, HEYDRICH and SCHELLENBERG knew much more about the anti-regime efforts and processes in the Abwehr than they said.

The three high SS leaders did not play with each other with open cards, and that is the reason why CANARIS and his friends were spared for a long time.

From 1939 to 1944, the Abwehr tops got hold of highly important intelligence and made little of it!

Admiral CANARIS was a loyal friend of the English, but a fierce opponent of STALIN. He saw CHURCHILL IN 1938 and met his English counterpart Stuart MENZIES at least once during the war in Spain. <sup>1</sup>

In prison, he revealed to his confidant Count SOLTIKOV, "If Germany had ever wanted to make peace with England, it would have required an organization that London trusted. Only the Abwehr could have acted as such an instrument."

Russia was nevertheless indirectly supplied by CANARIS with secret material from Germany. The messages that CANARIS transmitted to the British secret service went directly to Moscow after evaluation by the double agent Kim PHILBY. CANARIS accepted this because he knew about the penetration of the British secret service SIS by the Soviets, while he handed over secret material to the Western Allies. Even immediately before the outbreak of war, the German intelligence chief confided to his associate LAHOUSEN: "If defeat for Germany would be a great misfortune, then a German victory would be an even greater disaster."

Now it becomes clear why so many actions of the German secret service failed during the war. The captured agents were usually given short shrift.

After Wilhelm  
CANARIS' appointment  
as chief of the German  
Abwehr, the head of the  
RFP's Security Main  
Office, HEYDRICH, and  
leading members of the  
Wehrmacht held a  
comradeship evening  
in his honor. From left:  
Oberst der Flieger  
EBERT, Kapitän zur  
See CANARIS, p-Grup-  
penführer HEYDRICH,  
Generalmajor KAR-  
MANN, p-  
Gruppenführer Karl  
VON EBERSTEIN,  
Generalleutnant -  
LIEBMANN, and  
Fliegerkommodore  
---

In the winter and spring of 1942, HEYDRICH had gathered enough material on the misconduct of the Abwehr leadership to put an end to the CANARIS organization. This, however, meant that there was a danger that the **3000 agents of the Abwehr** would be incorporated into the SS. However, probably only a few of them knew that they were working for conspirators

But CANARIS was saved again when SS-Obergruppenführer HEYDRICH fell victim to an assassination attempt in Prague by an agent commandospecially parachuted in from England. CANARIS himself is said to have been the instigator of the attack. Colonel Frantisek MORAVETZ, head of the Czech intelligence department in exile, later stated that the assassination of HEYDRICH HAD BEEN carried out at the request of British intelligence: "I was told that the reason was that **HEYDRICH had been** on the trail of particularly important British agents.

The >inexplicable< betrayals continued. Admiral CANARIS then tried to put the blame on the agent group >Rote Kapelle< during the trial at the end of **1942** by testifying that the >Rote Kapelle< had "lost about **100000** - soldiers of the German Wehrmacht through this betrayal".

It was not until **1944** that the German leadership recognized the truth about the Abwehr as the "intelligence service that worked in part for the enemy" (General Jom). To his architect GIESLER, HITLER confided in the fall of **1944**: "It was a constant glaring failure - or so it seems. That forced me to intervene and replace CANARIS. But after July **20**, it became really clear: It was not only failure, it was deliberate false reports, it was not only incompetence, it was sabotage, it was treason, the worst kind of treason, unbelievable that such a thing is possible at all. ... I don't know how many soldiers fell victim to this betrayal. "<sup>2</sup>

### **Was the Führer's headquarters >Werwolf< artificially contaminated with radioactivity?**

Before **20** June to **16** July **1942**, the Führer's headquarters was moved from East Prussia to the Eichenhain (>Werwolf<) facility between Vinnitsa and Shitornir. In this way, HITLER WAS able to follow and control the **1942** summer offensive into the Caucasus and Stalingrad from closer range.

choice had fallen on the wooded area north of Vinnitsa because there was a larger lei^rngsspiune there, so that a rapid technical connection of the Führerhauptquartier to the Wehrmacht reporting network was possible<sup>1- 2</sup>

The construction of >Werwolf< took place from November 1941 to December 1942. Up to 1000 members of the Organisation Todt and 8000 Russian auxiliaries worked on the plant.

Modern Ukrainian authors speak here of a dark secret. For them it is certain that these assistants were later shot together with the members of the German OT. plane with "foreign (German) specialists of construction supervision and planning of Vinnitsa No such strict secrecy measures been taken during the construction of other Fuehrer headquarters"<sup>3</sup>

A serious accusation, which, strangely enough, does not appear anywhere in the >resistance literature<. Are there any reasons for this?

If this should be true, someone in connection with Hitler's headquarters >Werwolf< must have had quite a lot to hide. At least to the airplane crash of the building supervision the author could determine clues.

After its completion, >Werwolf< made a far friendlier impression than the Führer's headquarters >Wolfsschanze< in East Prussia.

The plant was built according to the most modern aspects, including a sewerage system of a biological treatment plant, which discharged only treated wastewater into the river Bug. For this purpose, a sewer line of 8 km length was built with the necessary control shafts. The buildings of the Führer headquarters >Werwolf< were rustic blockhouses, barracks and shelters. Here, too, the intention was to build biologically. HITLER had issued the condition that, for health reasons, only raw wood was to be used, without staining. Nevertheless, HITLER was dissatisfied with the accommodation and complained again and again about severe headaches as long as he was in the headquarters >Werwolf<.

Security considerations were also taken into account, and >Werwolf< had the strongest bunkering of all Führerhauptquartiere. 4.5 m thick bunker ceilings would also have survived direct hits with the bombs usual in 1942/43.

Apart from the Führer's headquarters >Wolfsschanze<, there was no command facility where HITLER had stayed longer. On August 27, 1943, he entered the facility for the last time. Finally, >Who-

>Werwolf< - the radiant Fuehrer headquarters in Vinnitsa (Ukraine).  
Were radioactive substances such as radium built into HITLER'S blockhouse here by Admiral CANARIS' Abwehr? Even today an excessive radioactivity can be measured there. (Drawing modified after Adam HOOK) Neil SHORT, *The Führer's Headquarters*, Osprey, Botley 2010, 5. 25.

wolf< was blown up on December 28, 1943, on HITLER's orders as -  
theRed Armyapproached.

Today the parts of the bunker complex >Werwolf<can be  
foundscattered on an area of about 8 outside Vinnitsa

The local population knows very little about the plant at that time.  
However, modern Russian researchers have determined that the  
radioactive intensity of the site where the >Werwolf< plant was located  
is SOO times higher than the normal permissible radiation levels.

In addition, findings are cited in Russia according to which the  
visible rapid aging of Adolf HITLER from the end of 1942 was due to the  
high radioactive intensity in Werwolf.Führer had

probably exposed himself to a danger considered at that time Or was it completely different?

Therefore, the interesting consideration arises whether the detected radioactive radiation in >Werwolf< originated only from natural sources or whether it was a deliberate assassination attempt against HITLER with radioactive substances. It should be remembered that HITLER - complained of constant headaches and ill-temper during his stay in Vinnitsa. These are also symptoms of radiation poisoning. Many of Hitler's closest confidants also noticed that during his stays in Vinnitsa the Führer behaved fundamentally differently than usual.

Interestingly, however, these symptoms of a presumed radiation damage have become known - only from HITLER and not from the other inhabitants of >Werwolf<. So, was HITLER'S accommodation, to which he often retreated for a long time after quarrels with the military, >specifically< treated with radioactive substances?

Thus, we know that Admiral Wilhelm CANARIS WAS in Vinnitsa with the former Chief of Abwehr II Erwin LAHOUSEN IN THE summer of 1942. <sup>1</sup> This would not be an isolated case, for together with LAHOUSEN, CANARIS later also personally brought English explosives to Smolensk for a planned attack against HITLER on March 13, 1943. <sup>2</sup> The lethal effect of radioactive substances was unknown to many at the time, but not to the Abwehr leadership. Admiral CANARIS had precise knowledge of the German atomic weapons program and, through the Abwehr he commanded, had the closest contacts with atomic scientists at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin and with the French radium researcher JOLIOT-CURIE. The German physicist Wolfgang GERTNER supervised and protected Joliot-Curie's radium research on behalf of the Abwehr. <sup>3</sup> Thus, knowledge, personnel and material for such an assassination would have been available.

That CANARIS behaved strangely in Winnitsa is proven. PICKER, for example, reported in his *table talks* that he had experienced "for the first time that a table invitation from Hitler was declined by a military man - the spy chief Admiral Wilhelm CANARIS." <sup>4</sup> Was there something in the room that the admiral feared?

Should Ukrainian scientists eventually succeed in proving that the unusually high levels of radioactivity in Vinnitsa are due to non-natural sources, this would be a case similar to the suspected arsenic poisoning of Emperor NAPOLEON by the English on St. Helena.

## **10. Chapter**

**The >Summer Miracle 1942<  
Germany's second chance to win -  
and why it came to nothing again**



## **1 0 A: Offense under a bad star?**

### **Securing the initial base and prevented flank clearance - what role did betrayal play in the battle for Sevastopol and Leningrad?**

#### **Summer 1942: Russia must be saved for the second time**

Contrary to what is perceived by the public today, Russia was practically on the verge of collapse again in the summer of 1942.

Just like the Germans, the Russians had suffered terrible losses since December 1941. Only - theirs were 10 to 20 times higher. Soviet Union's economic strength had fallen dramatically from the previous year, and one-third of the railroad network was in German-occupied territory. Heavy industry production had fallen by 75 percent with the loss of the Donbas industrial district. Soviet granaries helped occupy the Germans. In addition, the Russian soldiers were becoming increasingly demoralized.

Then, when the German attack >Operation Blue< began on July 28, 1942, the Soviet forces found themselves in a similar situation as in June of the previous year - except that their forces had also declined significantly. Within a few weeks clear signs of demoralization among the Red Army. When the city of Rostov at the mouth of the Danube was captured by the Wehrmacht on July 23, 1942, only a few NKVD troops defended it as the regular army fled headlong. All discipline broke down, whole units simply left weapons and equipment lying around. This had not happened since the beginning of the war.

Observers in Moscow recognized how the population of the city was again seized by panic, even if it was not as great as in October 1941. A loss of the oil wells in the Caucasus, like the city of Stalingrad, would probably mean the end for STALIN's rule. This was clear. Communications broke down, so that Soviet commanders could hardly influence the fighting front.

For the Germans, the large-scale attack began promisingly. Army Group B crossed the Don River, and by August 23, 1942, German troops had advanced north of Stalingrad to the Volga and reached the outskirts of the city.

At HITLER's headquarters in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, there was exuberance, according to an eyewitness.

Once again, it looked as if STALIN WAS ABOUT to face disaster. Already on July 28, 1942, STALIN had taken a measure, concealed for decades in the postwar period, to prevent the breakdown of discipline and order in the Red Army. He had the famous Order No. 227: Neshagunasad! issued, which in German meant "not a step back." Persistently, to the last drop of blood, according to STALIN, every position, every meter of Soviet soil

had to be defended, had to be clung to every speck of earth and it had to be held to the last possibility! All those who did not obey the order No. 227 were executed immediately without circumstances or ended up in the punishment battalions. Recent Russian estimates put the number of soldiers condemned to execution on the part of the Red Army during the war at 158000.

so-called interdiction units were formed from regular troops and retreating troops forward again with machine-gun fire

Many therefore argue that in the summer of 1942 the Soviet Union fought because it was forced to fight fear of . the NKVD, which supposed to order among the civilian population, now had its counterpart among the fighting troops

STALIN, however, not only had his interdiction units to regain control of the situation in the summer of 1942, but he also had the allies America and England, who could not or would not provide him with a >Second Front< to relieve him at that time, but who saved the Soviet economy and army from collapse with incredible supplies of materials and weapons.

greatest need, however, it was above all strange circumstances and blunders on the German side that came to his aid

Richard OVERY, then, in his well-known history of Russia's war, wrote: "How the Red Army held out at Stalingrad cannot be explained in military terms."

This is how the German summer offensive of 1942 was betrayed

HITLER had already expressed in his Führerweisung of November 11, 1941, the intention to start an offensive in the direction of the Caucasus at an appropriate time. This plan was already revealed to the Russians on 14 November 1941 by a telegram from the >Rote Kapelle<. According to it, the march was to be completed by 1 May 1942. HITLER'S offensive intention also made the rounds in the salons of the Berlin conspirators at the end of November. It was no wonder, then, that the Russians were able to make their preparations against this offensive in time.

On April 5, 1942, HITLER issued the final directive No. 41 for the coming Caucasus offensive. However, it took less than 24 hours for all the details of this directive to find their way over the radio to Moscow from General FELLGIEBEL's circle. Only a few days later the sparrows in the world's cities were whistling from the rooftops that Germany would

attack in the south of Russia in the spring.<sup>1-3</sup>

This was not all. In the summer of 1941, two former Polish officers, Captain ARZYSZEWSKI and Lieutenant MEYER, HAD been parachuted south of Warsaw by a Soviet plane. A transmitting device and a codebook were in the luggage of the Poles who, unlike their comrades willing to cooperate with the Soviets and were not, like them, executed at Katyn in 1940. The two agents, with the help of some associates had then succeeded in gathering complete clarity about the extent and details concerning the German troops amassed at Kharkov. When in the summer of 1942 in Warsaw's suburb of Otwock, after a long search, the agent transmitter of the Poles could be excavated, deciphered 538 transmitted radio messages with the help of the codebook had also been captured.

Day and night they worked on solving the puzzles, and when they had deciphered the basic cipher, the breakdown and translation of the transmissions could begin. All the radio messages were signed "ARCO". After deciphering, it was clear that the two Polish agents had managed to get a complete picture of the German deployment for the summer offensive of 1942. But not only the deployment, also objectives, operational plans and the transports of corps and divisions were accurately and correctly recorded. STALIN'S General Staff now had an easy time identifying the focal points of the coming German offensive from the information provided by these two Polish radio agents alone.

The German defense specialists compared all the radio message material of "ARCO" with the radio messages which had been sent to Moscow by the transmitters of the >Red Chapel< and the >Red Three< during the period in question. It was found that such an interplay had taken place as was more perfectly

could hardly be conceived. Everything that ARCO could not supply, either the transmitters of the >Red Kapelle< (Berlin and Brussels) or the >Red Drei< (Switzerland) supplied. Everything that agents RAoo (Switzerland) or I<ENT and GILBERT (Red Chapel) sent to Moscow was confirmed by the reports from Otwok, as far as it related to the German summer offensive of 1942. The control of these three groups of transmitters was so meticulous that the German defense specialists stood in stunned amazement before the map on which they had noted all the information that had gone to Moscow

What did the German high command learn from these alarming findings? experts rush to the Fuehrer's headquarters with the found material to report - and warn HITLER AND the high command? Far from it!

Thus the final report of the German radio counterintelligence, which had cracked the Arco ring in Warsaw, never came under the eyes of Adolf HnLER. The responsible chief of Wehrmacht intelligence liaison at the Fuehrer's headquarters, General Erich FELLGIEBEL, returned the report to the Funkabwehr, which was under his command, on the grounds that it was too long to ^submit to the Fuehrer. When an abridged . version was submitted, it was called >>TOO alarming." The submission, FELLGIEBEL said, would only agitate the Führer.

Soviet troops counterattacking in the Kharkov area. Despite considerable losses on the Russian side, TYMOSHENKO'S - stubborn resistance contributed to the postponement of >Operation Blue<, the major summer offensive in the south of the Eastern Front - with serious consequences.

However, the Soviets drew their conclusions from the incoming agent reports with breathtaking speed. On May 18, VON Bock - wanted to launch the prelude to >Operation Blue< near Kharkov. It was called >Fridericus< - and never took place. In haste with which the Russians got ahead of the Germans, the fact that the Russian troops were poorly prepared for the attack and in some cases were not even fully available. Already on May 12, 1942, TIMOSHENKO'S armies attacked Bock's army group. The German deployments for the offensive were

blown up. The Soviets tried to destroy everything they came across. By May 20, 1942, they had already lost 450 tanks but still their armored brigades raced around the breach destroying what could be destroyed at all. Five days later, the three Soviet armies were encircled by TIMOSHENKO and again they tried to break through, which meant that more and more German troops had to be deployed to maintain the encirclement - including troops for the great summer offensive. As

May 30, 1942 the battle was over, the Russians had lost 1508 tanks and over 3159 guns. Six Soviet armies were crushed, 409,000 Soviet soldiers went into captivity.

Although this looked to the outside world like a remarkable German victory, TIMOSHENKO had achieved his strategic goal: the German summer offensive against the Caucasus could not begin on schedule. TIMOSHENKO had thrown German deployments into too much disarray. Instead of May 25, 1942, as originally planned, the German armies did not begin their advance until July 4, six weeks later.

However, the Soviets, acting on the reports of their agents, had imagined the matter at Kharkov too easily and thus lost six armies. However, they almost succeeded in their enormous undertaking. Field Marshal VON BOCK was already thinking of ordering the evacuation of. At the last moment HITLER himself flew to the front to the headquarters of the army group and persuaded the defender of Kharkov, General PAULUS, to hold out until it was possible for the German troops to close the kettle. Thus, HITLER'S last-minute intervention had turned certain defeat into a great victory for German troops. 240,000 Russian prisoners went west to German camps.<sup>1</sup>

TIMOSHENKO'S unexpected defeat severely tested the Russians'

confidence in their agents. In the aftermath of the war, former agent Alexander FOOTE was sharply reprimanded by his director in Moscow that reports of German troop dislocationson the Eastern Front had costus four hundred thousand men at Kharkovand led to the GermansreachingStalingrad." Afterwards, the Russians almost assumed that the words that had led TYMOSHENKO INTO A trap had come from double agents working in the service of the German Abwehr.

In fact, the postponement of almost six weeks was enough to trigger the German failure in the south of the Eastern Front. Stalingradcould have been taken by September 1942 at the latest if the offensive had begun in time^r After that, the Germans would have been in a position to reinforce the Caucasus front with the troops released from Stalingrad in such a way that the breakthrough there would also have been possible without any problems.

Hardly had the preparation of the German troops for the main offensive of the summer of 1942 been completed after this delay, whena new >disaster< similar to the >Fall of Mechelen< in the spring of 1940 occurred. On 18June 1942, only fourteen days before the start ofoffensive, the first general staff officer of the 23rd Panzer Division hadflownwith his airman >Storch< to a neighboring division in violation ofto discuss secret orders with its commander In the process, under unexplained circumstances, he strayed across the Russian front and was shot down or forced to make an emergency landing. When a German assault team later found the wreckage of his plane in no man's land, it had been completely looted. Whether the twobodiesburied there were the General Staff officer Major REICHEL and his pilot is still unknown. In any case, STALIN thus came into possession of accurate documents on how the German coming offensive was to be conducted to the east and southeast.All details about the deployment and organization of the troops were up to date andbeen delivered toRussians as if on a silver platterA courier plane carried the captured papersMoscowThe next day they lay STAUN on the table. <sup>1</sup> HITLER raged when this was reported, but with the offensive so close at hand, it seemed impossible for the German leadership to regroupand make ^rnush preparations. <sup>2</sup>

Through all this, the Soviet leadership had gained an invaluable insight into what lay ahead. Germany was now faced with the unpleasant choice of either foregoing operations in the south of the Soviet Union or carrying them out as planned without the all-important factor of surprise.

Otto PÜNTER, chief of a Russian radio group in Switzerlandas an

agent under the code name >Pakbo<, wrote that the German plans were reported in all details by Rudolf RÖSSLER to>RAoo< as early as the spring of **1942**: "Through cipher work I received largely knowledge and must always marvel at the accuracy of RÖSSLER's information." When the summer offensive of **1942** was launched by the Germans, the Russians were informed not only about the Caucasus-Volga thrust, but also about the inventory of the attacking army groups, their commands, and their equipment. This complete knowledge allowed the Russians to accurately plan and execute their counter-actions. Nevertheless, it is still claimed today that STALIN was undecided about German intentions and concentrated his reserves in front of Moscow.<sup>1</sup>

Full of frustration, the Germans then had to discover how well briefed the Soviets were. On August **29, 1942**, units of the **24th** German Armored Division had captured the command post of the **138th** - Soviet Rifle Division. Among the papers taken from a Russian major was an information sheet from the LXI Siberian Guard Corps. Although the sheet was two-thirds destroyed, the date could be seen as June **9, 1942**. The divisions **44, 76, 295, 305, 384** and **389** were indicated on it as belonging to the **6th** German Army. Since the **389th Division** was under the **44th** Infantry Division, it could be assumed that the first Reinhardt contained further details of at least ten divisions.

### **Playing with the wrong cards from the start? The misjudgment of the enemy situation**

In order to better understand the failure of the German offensive of **1942** in the southern part of the Eastern Front, it must be pointed out that HITLER and the High Command of the Wehrmacht made their decisions on the basis of the situation reports of the High Command of the Army (OKH), in particular of its Abteilung >Fremde Heere Ost<.<sup>2,3</sup> From the spring of **1942**, this division was headed by Colonel in the General Staff and later Major General Reinhard GEHLEN. GEHLEN had previously been adjutant to Chief of General Staff HALDER and, as early as November

decisions of the High  
Command of the  
Wehrmacht on the  
(distorted) situation  
reports of the High  
Command of the Army  
(OKH) On 1.

June 1942 HITLER visited  
the headquarters  
of >Heeresgruppe Süd<  
in Poltava. There, the  
>Plan Blau< was  
discussed in detail.

*Half right:* General  
PAULUS in conversation  
with  
KEITEL; *left:* WEICHS,

1940, as Group Leader East, he was closely involved in the preparation and conduct of the initial battles of >Unternehmen Barbarossa< fact, contrary to what is portrayed in today's public opinion, Colonel GEHLEN WAS caught in contradictions and mistakes from the very beginning.

Thus, at the beginning of June 1942, he estimated that the Russian enemy would hardly succeed a second time in mustering a force as strong as that of the previous winter. Although GEHLEN's estimate of the enemy's strength at the end of May at 4.7 million men on the front and in reserve was only slightly below the actual figure of 5.1 million, on the other hand, GEHLEN - and his deputy Colonel i. G. VON DER ROENNE, did not want to have any knowledge of the armies in reserve, the newly raised tank armies, and the independent tank corps.

When >Fremde Heere Ost< assumed only 25 armored brigades in front of the front of Army Group South, GEHLEN and VON DER ROENNE MADE another gross >underestimate<. This was subsequently corrected only hesitantly.

At the beginning of August, >Foreign Armies East< unbelievably reported that the Red Army had not been able to raise any new formations since February 1942 due to the shortage of officers!

Such misreporting and inconsistencies were bound to lead to military failures and defeats sooner or later.

GEHLEN and VON DER ROENNE were supposed to provide reliable and The military forces were able to provide the necessary data for assessing the



The question is therefore whether there were none, whether they did not know them, whether they could not classify them correctly or whether they rather knew everything and irresponsibly distorted and suppressed it.

Let us therefore consider what the German services later accomplished before the Russian offensive.

### **>Missile Game< is on again: The weakening of the bomber fleet after >Fall Blau< using the example of a Junkers Ju-88 fighter squadron**

No sooner had >Fall Blau< begun on June 28, 1942, than strange developments again appeared in the German Air Force. On the southern front, for example, the 2nd /KG54 was the only unit still equipped with the powerful Junkers Ju-88 bombers. Two weeks earlier, it had been moved south from the Bryansk sector specifically to support the 6th Army's advance toward Stalingrad.

As early as July 8, 1942, however, the 2nd /KG54 received orders from the Luftwaffe High Command to transfer to Beauvais in northern France. Barely two weeks later, the group was hastily sent back to the Eastern Front. This had been enough to ensure that the Ju-88 pilots, who were no longer trained in British operations, had already lost four aircraft over southern England.

The confusion now continued. The 2nd /KG54 no longer returned to Kharkov in southern Russia, but flew to Shatalovka in the area of Army Group Central. As early as October 9, 1942, the unit was again ordered back to the Reich before reuniting with the rest of the squadron in the Mediterranean area.<sup>1</sup>

The 2nd /KG54 was not an isolated case. This and other cases showed either increasing confusion at the Luftwaffe High Command or deliberate misconduct. This way, urgently needed aircraft units were senselessly chased back and forth between different air bases and >burned up< without anything to show for it.

### **Again: sudden shortage of ammunition and bombs during the attack on Sevastopol**

On June 2, 1942, the long-awaited German offensive battle against the supposedly impregnable fortress of Sevastopol in the Crimea had begun.

*Left:* Soviet battery tongue at the exit of Svernya Bay near Sevastopol. *Right:* After the storming of Sevastopol: German grenadiers inspect a dome of the destroyed >Maxim Gorki< tank factory.

Its conquest was an important prerequisite for the successful launch of >Operation Blue< For months, the Wehrmacht had prepared the attack on Sevastopol. But in the midst of the decisive offensive actions, acute supply shortages, especially of bombs and ammunition, >suddenly< occurred. The situation became so desperate. Ju-88 units were no longer allowed to release their bombs in line drops over the sea fortress. Instead, they were ordered to release them individually in a dive. This meant that in the course of even a single day, Ju-88 pilots had to make as many as 32 separate dive bombs per crew into the flak hell over Sevastopol. <sup>1</sup> This was only to bring a single 250 kg bomb on target at a time! An unnecessary waste of time and fuel as well as a massive additional danger to the crew.

whattopols had scheduled only four days, when in fact it lasted several weeks. Again, no one was <sup>held</sup> accountable-

whole thing sounds all the more incredible because the alleged shortage occurred before the start of the long-planned major German offensive, i.e. at a time when timely stockpiling must have been possible without any problems.

Despite this renewed >failure< of the supply units, Sevastopol fortress fell on July 1, 1942, by which time the great German summer offensive in the southern part of the Eastern Front was already three days old. Responsible supply officers then justified themselves with the fact that for the conquest

## **The enigma of the attempted >decapitation strikes< in Crimea: how the 11th Army High Command was to be destroyed**

After the Wehrmacht captured the city of Sevastopol, the strongest fortress in the world, it came within a hair's breadth of a major disaster for the leading officers. On July 5, 1942 the Germans held a victory banquet in the old Tsar fortress of Livadia in Yalta. All unit commanders of the 11th Army from battalion command upward, as well as several senior air force commanders

Just when the festivities had reached their peak, Soviet planes ended the celebration. Tupolev SB bombers of the 6th Bomber Regiment of the 5th Air Army carried out a surprise attack in the middle of the night, sending the festively dressed officers stumbling into the cellars and causing carnage among their drivers waiting outside. The attack came within a hair of rendering the 11th Army leaderless after its victory and was allegedly based on information from partisans.<sup>1</sup> However, it is quite possible that the well-informed >partisans< were in fact wearing German uniforms.

In this light, an event also seems noteworthy in which Colonel General Erich VON MANSTEIN almost lost his life on June 1, 1942, just as the Battle of Sevastopol was beginning. VON MANSTEIN - had boarded a small Italian speedboat with only a few confidants and, together with the port commander of Yalta, wanted to reconnoiter from the sea a strategically important coastal road through which German supplies were to roll.

Suddenly they were fired upon by two Soviet Yak-1s. The port commander of Yalta, Captain Joachim VON WEDEL, the Italian ship's captain and the Colonel General's loyal driver, Sergeant Major Fritz NAGEL, WERE killed. VON MANSTEIN was only able to escape unharmed with a great deal of luck motionless speedboat was then towed back into the harbor by a Croatian motorboat after a member of the ship's crew swam death-defyingly ashore through a minefield to get help

Until now, the attack by the two Soviet fighter pilots, Captain AVDEYEV and his fellow Rotten DANILKO, on the lone, unprotected speedboat carrying the commander-in-chief of the 11th Army was considered a mere coincidence. A failure by MANSTEIN would have jeopardized the German attack on the Sevastopol fortress. Was that what it was all about?

The question is whether there is not a parallel here with the later attack by Russian bombers on Yalta Castle.

### **>Operation Northern Lights< is deleted: Leningrad 1942**

In the late summer of 1941, the German leadership had refrained from realizing the operational objective of >Heeresgruppe Nord< to take Leningrad.

In the spring of 1942, HITLER decided to correct this mistake. According to instruction number 41 of April 5, 1942, the conquest of Leningrad, which had been postponed the previous year, was to take place as >Operation Northern Lights" as soon as troops and especially heavy siege artillery became available after the victory in the Crimea.

When Field Marshal VON MANSTEIN had fought down the strongest fortress in the world, Sevastopol, in the summer of 1942, HITLER DECIDED TO use the Field Marshal with his 11th Army against Leningrad. The next fortress was to fall!

VON MANSTEIN'S plan was both simple and ingenious: he wanted to break through the Soviet positions from the south with three corps, advance to the edge of the city, restrain himself there, turn east with two corps, cross the Neva River, and then capture the city. <sup>1</sup>

greatest haste, the siege artillery, superheavy mortars, and giant guns were sent north by rail transport. As an added bonus, HITLER had arranged for the first four >Tiger< tanks to support the 11th Army's attack against Leningrad on a trial basis. The Red Army, however, forestalled this major attack by MANSTEIN in the north by launching its

own offensive on the Volkov, sending the Second Shock Army into a - major assault from the Volkhov front westward on 24 August 1942 on - Schlüsselburg and Mga, the pivot of the northern front.

The fact is that all this was no accident. Even before VON MANSTEIN knew in early August 1942 that Leningrad was waiting, Moscow already knew HITLER'S intention. Berlin traitors had radioed the plan to the Russians, and STAUN immediately prepared to counterattack.

Therefore, in a feverish haste, new formations were created on the Volchov front. Barely trained recruits, who had been under arms for only three weeks, from all parts of the Soviet Empire, as well as penal regiments, surviving Siberians from the Winter Battle and Turkmen were carted in - 16 rifle divisions, 9 brigades, 5 tank brigades with 300 tanks were brought together in this way by the commander-in-chief of the >Volkhov Front<.

While VON MANSTEIN was marching on the southern front of the Leningrad cauldron for the offensive >Nordlicht<, the Russians arrived at the

August 27, 1942 from the Volchov front before. They entered against the German bottleneck establish a front connection with Leningrad eastern front of the completely surprised German 18th Army was broken at Gaitolovo at the >Elektro-Schneise<.

With incredible bravery, units of the 223rd and 227th Infantry Divisions prevented the Russian breakthrough here. For days they held the position and repelled any incursion by the superior Russian forces. Nevertheless, in the end the Russians bore down 12 km to the west and had almost reached Mga, the junction of the Kirov Railway.

Now VON MANSTEIN had to use his already ready 11th Army attack forces to defend and counterattack against the Russian Volkhov offensive. In heavy fighting, his units, together with the units of General LINDEMANN'S

18. Army achieved a full defensive success. In addition to 12,000 prisoners brought in, 244 tanks were destroyed.

The consequence, however, was that >Operation Northern Lights" could no longer carry out ammunition for the attack on Leningrad had been used up, and the weakened German units of the 11th Army had to be refreshed. However, this was not to take place, since already in November 1942 the catastrophe of Stalingrad put an immediate end to all German plans for an attack on Leningrad.

The siege artillery from Sevastopol remained outside Leningrad until 1944 or was partly (80 cm >Dora<, mortars >Thor< ) transferred back to the Reich.

Germany had lost the initiative on the northern wing of the eastern front through treachery. The decision was now to be made the southern part of the Eastern Front. 11th Army, which had lost its striking power at the Volchov, was to be bitterly lacking in the Caucasus!

## **Was the introduction of the main battle tank >Tiger< in 1942 to be prevented?**

In the summer of 1942, the first >Tiger< tanks were also to be deployed outside Leningrad as part of >Operation Northern Lights<. The Henschel >Tiger< E had no counterpart on the Allied side at the time and was something of a reversal of the technical situation of the summer and fall of 1941. However, due to its rapid development, there had been numerous technical glitches that had not yet been ironed out. These delays had brought HITLER, according to former Chief of General Staff HALDER in January 1970, to the brink of frenzy and he demanded as quickly as possible and with the utmost urgency the demonstration of the >Tiger< on the battle front.<sup>1</sup>

On August 23, 1942, a special train was set out from Fallingb. for the Eastern Front. For the only four tanks to be loaded, a huge contingent of 18-ton tractors, special trucks, a transportable crane with a lifting capacity of 10 tons, a medical train, and also an anti-aircraft train with 2 cm anti-aircraft guns had been provided. The train, pulled by two locomotives, was easily transferred via Berlin-Schneidemühl-Tilsit to Tossno. After the onward journey however, the rail transport was attacked by Russian battle The railroad flak was able to repel this attack. It is noticeable that in the summer of 1942 Soviet fighter planes were engaged in railroad hunting over German-occupied territory. This was a very rare occurrence at that time, and the question arises whether the Soviets were informed of the special transport in advance.

After >Operation Nordlicht< had to be cancelled because of the Soviet counterattack, the four >Tigers< were now to attack before Leningrad at a place where several attempts of Panzer III of the 12th Panzer Division had already failed to blow up a strong Russian Pak bunker bar. It was expected that the new tank would be able to crack this Russian bunker and Pak barricade.

The first mission of the >Tiger< E took place on August 28, 1942. All vehicles were shot immobile or simply stopped in the terrain with engines and transmissions prone to failure. All four cars were recovered and repaired.

On September 21, 1942, the >Tigers< were deployed again. This time the terrain was even more unsuitable.

After a few hundred meters of advance, all four >Tigers< got stuck in the swamp, had transmission damage, or were shot immobile by Soviet Paks. Three of them could be recovered with great difficulty only with the support of artillery and infantry. The furthest advanced >Tiger< had run into a swamp and was sitting there with its hull on.

It could not towed and was under constant fire the enemy highest command authorities up to HITLER WERE CONCERNED with this one stuck tank. Because of its construction, it was not to fall into enemy hands under any circumstances. It was not until November 24, 1942, that an attempt was made to blow up the stalled >Tiger< after removing usable parts. Although the blast was fully successful, the Russians were nevertheless able to draw valuable conclusions from the wreckage regarding technical innovations on the >Tiger<. This was to become apparent in 1943.

After the failed second attack, there were bitter discussions about who or what was to blame for the mission's failure. Major MARKER, who commanded the attack, stated during a discussion at the Fuehrer's headquarters on reporting on November 21, 1942, that he had personally been to Army High Command 18 (Colonel General LINDEMANN) BEFORE THE attack and had pointed out the expected terrain difficulties regarding the >Tiger< mission. However, Reichsmarschall GORING replied that, based on the aerial photographs taken by the German reconnaissance planes, in his opinion the terrain had been suitable for tanks.

But since all other experts were of the opinion that the ^ngriffsgelände was completely unsuitable for heavy tanks, the question arises as to who had suggested to HITLER the deployment of the new Tigers at this location. We do not know.

Even before the failed attack, the first reports of damage to the gearshift and steering gears of the >Tiger< arrived in mid-September 1942. Colonel THOMALE of the Army Armament Office came to the conclusion that the >Tiger< had to be rejected as unsuitable for troop use. He refused to send Germans into battle with such a vehicle.

A representative of the Maybach company, which was responsible for the faulty manual transmission of the >Tiger< E, made it clear that the companies had always been told that the vehicles did not necessarily have to be fit for troop use, but that they should be shipped to the front by all means possible in order to be able to test them there for field usability. Who gave this instruction?

Unfortunately, no name was mentioned here that would reveal to us the name of the suspected saboteur.

The rejection of the >Tiger< generated in this way then went so far that as late as September or October 1942 the >Tiger< was called a "lame cart" by authoritative bodies and the cylindrically shaped turret by Krupp compared to a tin can.

However, the tank >Tiger< was not removed from the armament planning. After only a few months, the >Tiger< became the terror of the Allied tank forces in East and West and remained so until 1945.

Even today there is a bitter dispute among experts about the first

deployment of the >Tiger< in front of Leningrad. The most different versions are represented according to own point of view. Although the final truth will probably never be known, considerable maneuvering is evident to prevent the introduction of the superior tank Wehrmacht

Similar incidents also occurred with the new >King Tiger< in 1944.



## **1 OB. >Unexplained transportation problems< and corruption weaken the German attack on the southern front**

### **Delays as in 1 941 : The conspicuous railroad conditions during the German offensive in southern Russia.**

Logistically, the German attack in the south was a challenge. This was clear from the outset.

The traffic conditions in the southern part of the Eastern Front, especially the availability of water, were very unfavorable. Therefore, the Wehrmacht had prepared the offensive with the greatest logistical efforts.

The German summer offensive of **1942** had begun on June **28, 1942**. When, after the beginning of Operation Blue<, extremely difficult operational and supply conditions arose in the rear area, a General des Transportwesens Südruß- land< was created in September **1942**. In November **1942**, - taking over the >Wehrmacht Transportleitung Ukraine<, this office became the - >Authorized General of Transport South Russia<this purpose, the Reichsbahn had set up a South Russia Transport Directorate

In spite of all this, supply difficulties with fuel and ammunition already occurred at the end of June (!) so that on July **23** a meeting was held at Army Group South in Stalino to discuss the inadequate supply situation of the **6th** Army. **It was** attended by the chief quartermasters of the armies of Army Group South, Quartermaster General WAGNER, and various other representatives discrepancy between command and supply possibilities came up without WAGNER drawing the necessary consequences.<sup>1</sup>

Bad problems also arose during the German advance into the Caucasus. The **1st** Panzer Army did not even have a railroad engineer company at its disposal. These were all deployed on the routes to Stalingrad. Operations toward the Caucasus stalled temporarily in mid-August because of fuel shortages, and finally at the end of August **1942**. STAUN could rejoice!

But these were not all the oddities. Despite German air supremacy, good weather and a fluid operating situation in the east, from the beginning of August there were considerable operating difficulties with increasing backlogs towards the front, which had a far-reaching effect backwards into the area of the General Directorate of the Eastern Railway.

Allegedly, these difficulties were caused by the frequently changing needs at the front, which made it necessary to bring forward individual trains or types of trains (ammunition, fuel, or hospital trains) and also to change destinations. In addition, there had been the increasing need for supplies for the Stalingrad front. supply from the Reich was not throttled, and unloaded trains remained as immobile reserves, occupying the station tracks needed for operations. Early unloading was carried out only on a small scale for lack of unloading organization and storage facilities. Crafty transport saboteurs had free rein, as in 1941!

On September 9, 1942, the transportation problem on the Eastern Front again became acute with General Luftzeugmeister MILCH. Trains with spare parts from Germany to Zaporozhye took six weeks and again stood around for weeks at the border. MILCH had become acquainted with the conditions in the spring and helped to keep order.

now noticeable that the problems seemed to emanate from the Lernberg lock

Therefore, MILCH wanted to open a kind of Luftwaffe escort barracks there since since the summer of 1941 only certain trains had armed escort soldiers with them. MILCH said desperately, "I am making this suggestion so that we finally know where our things are!" He also felt that older trains from the spring were still missing.<sup>1</sup>

On October 18, 1942, the new Chief of the General Staff, ZEITZLER, gave Transport Chief GERCKE the order to go immediately to Dnjepropetrowska and to clear up the transport difficulties as quickly as possible with the relevant parties involved in the transport and railroad services. After a night trip with the special train >Afrika<, the meeting took place in Dnjepropetrowska on October 19, 1942. Among others, State Secretary GANZENMÜLLER took part as a representative of the Reichsbahn. This was a guarantee that there would be no more beating around the bush. While at the conference the head of transport system repeatedly demanded with greater emphasis a tangible increase in performance by all possible and conceivable means, quite other things were also brought. The then leader of the >Wehrmacht Transportleitung Ukraine<, LIPPERT, commented that nothing remained unsaid at this meeting. GERCKE and also GANZENMÜLLER may have used strong words without being able to point out fundamental possibilities for a quick solution.

LIPPERT reported here about statements of officers of the >Wehrmacht-Transportleitung< who had clearly spoken of sabotage. In GREITNER's postwar account of the *railroads in World War II*, it says tellingly: "In retrospect, his (LIPPERT'S) report contains alleged statements by officers of

the Wehrmacht Transportleitung that did not fall in this unequivocal form." What is there to hide here?

When the retreat from the Caucasus began in January 1943, the evacuation and repatriation of the army and supplies on the railroad was limited not only by enemy action and passivity on the part of Soviet railroad workers, but also by German sabotage. For example, sabotage at the Mineralnye Vody station led to operational stoppages with a backlog of about 40 trains. There, a considerable number of locomotives and cars fell into the hands of the enemy in this way.

German sources also record that on the retreat from the Caucasus the railroad facilities were sometimes destroyed prematurely. This then prevented the Wehrmacht from clearing and removing them. Coincidences upon coincidences!

In this way, not only was the German attack on Stalingrad and the Caucasus in the summer of 1942 weakened by transport sabotage, but later the general clearing of the Caucasus area was severely hampered.

To make matters worse, in 1942 corruption was shown to have played its evil role in disrupting German supply operations.

### **Sabotage of a special kind: the defense as a nest of corruption and the unsolved mystery of the disappeared supply trains.**

The Abwehr of Admiral CANARIS developed relatively fast in 1940/41 on - highest level to a self-service store, in which production and nepotism prospered like a cancer. Not even CANARIS stopped at that, when he had fresh strawberries flown in from Spain on a special Luftwaffe plane or gave an employee a tobacco box studded with diamonds from NAPOLEON's possession out of the Abwehr's petty cash.<sup>1</sup>

Officers of the Abwehr, however, not only practiced a vibrant black market trade in foreign currency, carpets, paintings, scarce articles (Romania!) and the provision of UK requests for money, but also actively sabotaged the Reich's war effort with private transactions. Cases became known, for example oil destined for the Wehrmacht being delivered from Romania directly to the enemy. Rumors also knew that in 1941 >lost< railroad trains carrying valuable supplies for the East were completely cannibalized Mafia-style.

It just wouldn't stop, and corruption massively hampered German resupply efforts for the troops on the Don in 1942. The wide flow of goods from the Reich thus literally seeped away into dark channels, and after 1200 miles of transport, only a thin trickle reached the men at the

front.<sup>1</sup>

Ironically, however, it was precisely this kind of corruption that - triggered the downfall of the CANARIS clique in 1943.

### **German Military Mission Romania: Well-Being, Treason and Corruption?**

According to the secret additional protocol of the German-Soviet pact, the Soviet Union could lend itself valuable Romanian territory with Bessarabia and the entire Bukovina. With a deadline of 24 hours, STALIN had demanded the cession of these territories on July 26, 1940. The Red Army then also crossed the old borders of Romania on July 28, 1940 and occupied everything within four days. All this caught the Romanian army and administration completely unprepared.<sup>2</sup>

In desperation, Romania turned to Germany and asked for the sending of a German military mission with the aim of rebuilding and modernizing the Romanian army. Then, on October 12, 1940, the pre-commandos of the German army and air force mission arrived. They were to serve the same time the need of protection for the other Romanian territory against attacks of Russian and English troops and train the completely outdated Romanian army. Above all, Romanian oil (production, refineries and transshipment points) was to be protected.

The transfer of the German military mission to Romania, however, led to unbelievable consequences in the country up to price increases, shortage of goods and a growing inflation, since the German soldiers undertook not only official but also private purchases for speculation and self-dealing on a grand scale. Bukarest couriers, who traveled the Berlin-Bukarest route completely without danger as letter carriers on a "special mission" with the courier department of the OKW /OKH and the Abwehr, - became notorious. Their "strictly secret" courier baggage on the return trip was what mattered: precious items that were not allowed to be exported from Romania.<sup>1</sup> While one's comrades were falling at the front, one could safely get rich hereby transporting cash, jewelry and valuable art objects.

It soon became clear that in Romania it was not only possible to train and act excellently, but also to conspire. They moved under the protection of the uniform of the German Wehrmacht, were away from the annoying eyes of the controllers in the Reich, and were among themselves in the hope of being able to wait calmly for the end of the war.<sup>2</sup> It was so, as Georg PEMLER said, that "these gentlemen could make a nice life for themselves with Crimean champagne, caviar, lobster and oysters". Just as if the sacrificial walk of the front-line

soldiers was a kind of cabaret. People practiced betrayal and outdid each other about the "sh... Adolf", made stupid unqualified remarks about the "greatest general of all times", in short "Gröfaz", but did not shy away from awarded high medals by this very >>man" Strange characters, it seemed to me, who foamed at the mouth about the "criminal nature of this war, but had no qualms about doing everything they could, by recklessly deploying their soldiers, to quickly get hold of the medal, on whose award certificate was emblazoned the signature of the man they hated so much".

During the smashing of an Allied spy ring by the Romanian secret police >Siguranta<, documents had fallen into the hands of the secret services suggested the involvement of highest German positions. The traitors at the military mission had leaked to the British Intelligence Service and to the Russians the most precise documents on the German-Romanian exchange of goods. Everything was there: lists of the exact volume of Romanian oil deliveries, details of German arms shipments for the Romanian Wehrmacht, and reports on the situation of Romanian and German formations on the Eastern Front. highlight, however, was precise data on the organization and structure of German air defenses protecting the Romanian oil region, which could only have come from the armored cabinet of a higher German command post in Romania.

But this was not all; business was also done with the enemy. During the advance of ROMMEL'S units on El Alamein, large stocks of fuel were captured from an English depot, including several hundred barrels of lubricating oil with the inscription "Deutsche Luftwaffe ^ mission Rumänien" pressed into them. This vor koin ^ in is led to a major operation by the Gestapo and SD. Investigations revealed that a shipment of lubricating oil destined for the Luftwaffe, loaded on Danube tow train, had been held up by a shipping twist in Hungary, turned around, and routed to Turkey. The Turkish receiving company, also engaged in business with the British, did not even bother to decant the German barrels and forwarded them "as is" to the British 8th Army in Africa without much fuss.

Such deals could only take place with the participation of high German circles.

While the German offensive in the southern part of Russia was severely hampered by acute fuel shortages as early as the summer of 1942, here they supplied the enemy with oil intended for their own comrades. It has never been known whether the culprits were apprehended.

Postponed winter clothing and stolen food:  
not only Germans were harmed by corruption Eastern Front in 1942

Compared to the Red Army, the Italian troops were pitifully equipped for the Russian winter, and this despite the experience that the German troops had had to make in 1941 / 1942 with the climatic conditions in Russia.

The Alpine troops received some winter equipment in mid-November 1942. However, the quality and characteristics of the standard winter equipment left much to be desired. It was cumbersome and reduced movement especially during combat. Especially the important winter boots were completely inadequate.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, there were incredible cases of corruption. Less than half of the soldiers in most divisions had received the fur coats sent from Italy. For example, the >Cuneense<- division should have received 17,000 fur coats, but received only 3,000 for distribution. The >Ravenna< infantry division received 7000 fur coats for its 15000 soldiers. The only exception was the >Monte Cervino<- Battalion of the Alpini, which was the only unit of the entire Italian Alpine Corps to be completely provided with special clothing, roughly equivalent to the equipment of the Russians.

Now outrageous racketeering was revealed. In Woroschi-lowgrad Italian officers discovered that in the bazaars and stores one could buy not only Italian cigarettes, but also mountain boots and winter shoes. All the equipment of the Italian army was offered at unbelievable prices!- Rumors arose at the front that Italian officers were openly doing business with army equipment to make money.

The shortage should never have occurred like this, because countless railroad cars full of clothing, shoes and equipment for the coming winter had left Italy for the front in the summer of 1942. All these items should have been issued to the fighting troops.

Instead, within two days, Italian officers had discovered a suitable way to sell the goods to Russian civilians at vastly inflated prices. While the soldiers later froze and shivered at the front, there was everything behind the lines. The supplies were moved and looted, so that only token remnants reached the front, as was visible, for example, in the example of the >Monte Cervino< battalion

Entire food supplies that had been sent from Italy to Russia also disappeared. Coveted goods such as cigarettes, sugar, coffee and special foods were immediately sent back from Russia to Italy by corrupt officers and officials for use on the black market. This >supply< worked, anyway!

As if all this were not enough, however, the Alpini had to suffer from a severe shortage of diesel fuel. This had a history, because before their vehicles were loaded toward the Russian front, German supply officers

had told the Italians that there was more diesel than gasoline at the site of operations. The Italians had therefore sent trucks with diesel engines east. When they arrived in Russia, however, they found that just the opposite was true. The Germans had hardly any diesel fuel available there - what they had was gasoline! Again, one of the many sabotaging measures oddities that never brought consequences for those responsible

## **Chapter 11**

# **The Caucasus and Oil Why the Wehrmacht's Advance Really Failed**



Today HITLER is accused of having caused the failure of >Operation Blue< by splitting the attack forces in the south. This is also a falsification of history.

In July **1942**, Germany was in a better position in the south of the Eastern Front: **250,000** Germans and allies faced **187,000** Red Army troops, and **740** - Axis tanks were opposed by only **360** Russian tanks. <sup>1</sup>

Successes were then commensurate with first two phases of Operation Blue< On July **7, 1942**, Soviet Marshal TIMOSHENKO was able to escape from the Germans just in the nick of time when his Army Group Staff was overrun by German armored personnel carriers of the **3rd Armored** Division at dawn near Rossosh. <sup>2</sup>

But then the incomprehensible happened: From the Führer's headquarters came the order to cut >Heeresgruppe Süd< in two. The entire timetable of the great summer offensive was changed:

Field Marshal VON LIST'S >Heeresgruppe A< was internally named >Caucasus Front<. Army Group B was to go to Stalingrad.

In this way, the two major operational objectives of the **1942** summer offensive were to be achieved simultaneously, by division of forces, rather than one after the other, as initially planned.

The question is therefore who was responsible for this fateful decision.

On July **30, 1942**, Chief of General Staff HALDER noted in his diary: "At the leader's lecture, the floor is given to General Colonel Jom, who announces in great tones that the fate of the Caucasus will be decided at Stalingrad. Therefore, the transfer of forces from Army Group A to B is necessary. With this, an idea is served up in a new guise, which I presented to the Fuehrer 6 days ago, but where no one from the enlightened company of the OKW understood this idea."

This makes it clear that the fatal idea of weakening the offensive advance on the Caucasus by surrendering troops for the attack on Stalingrad originated with Chief of Staff General HALDER. <sup>3-4</sup> The systematic weakening of the German Caucasus offensive, as described elsewhere, now becomes explicable. Motives and actors raise questions.

### **How Germans "biggest and most momentous operational mistake" World War II came about**

In the post-war period, HITLER, and not Chief of Staff HALDER, WAS held responsible for the fateful simultaneity with which both attacks took place in the south of the Eastern Front. The former General Staff officer Count KIELMANNSEGG then also spoke of the "greatest and most momentous operational error." <sup>2</sup>

In fact, after the success of the German attack at Voronezh and the conquest of the Crimea in the crucial weeks of late July, early August **1942**, the German Wehrmacht leadership had failed to finalize the main objective of its summer campaign. Was it with Army Group A or **B**? HITLER, for strategic reasons wanted to intensify Army Group A's advance on the Caucasus area while the counter-group around HALDER wanted to

Occupy land bridge between Don and Volga. The idea to divide the offensive in order to save time was then not HITLER'S, but, as shown elsewhere, due to an action of Chief of General Staff HALDER.

HITLER'S target was the Caucasus. Nevertheless, he allowed HALDER TO pull the 4th Panzer Army out of Army Group A on July 30-31, 1942, - to reinforce the northern front for the attack on Stalingrad. Field Marshal LIST, commander of Army Group A, fought back. He charged that HALDER WAS MAKING A risky gamble in leading the Wehrmacht's southern advance into the Caucasus with such weak forces!

In response, HALDER also took away from him the 3rd Division >Groß- deutschland<, which was senselessly transferred away to Western Europe. As justification for this arbitrary measure, Chief of Staff HALDER REFERRED TO HRRLER. HRRLER had once reproached him for what use all his victories in Russia would be if he lost Western Europe.

HALDER'S actions caused the German advance in the Soviet Union to fragment into two equally strong army groups. In the end, the units attacking in the direction of the Caucasus with three armored divisions and three motorized divisions were even weaker than the actual >side direction< Stalingrad, for which four armored divisions and three motorized divisions were assigned.

The German offensive in midsummer 1942 was initially promising and soon resulted in large gains in space. The controversial division of forces for two simultaneous attack objectives ultimately led to the failure of both operations.

It is striking that today's historiography still holds HITLER, and not HALDER, responsible for this fateful simultaneity and fragmentation.

it must be asked what caused the German Chief of Staff one of the best military thinkers of his time, to make such disastrous rookie mistakes

**Only >weakness of nerves< of the Army? Why did the Luftwaffe raise serious accusations against the Wehrmacht at the end of August 1942?**

While General HALDER, then Chief of Staff, on August 27, 1942, - attributed the poor progress of the Wehrmacht before Stalingrad to "counteroffensives and the resistance of a numerically superior enemy," General VON RICHTHOFEN believed that the slowing of the German attack was due to the Wehrmacht's weak nerves and lack of leadership.

As late as early October 1942, he was certain that the Germans' lack of progress stemmed from the mistake of not properly concentrating the available troops.

On November 1, 1942, he informed General PAULUS and General VON SEYD- LITZ that the Luftwaffe was being misused by the 6th Army.- Although many bomber and dive bomber squadrons would fly as many as four sorties a day, the Army was not taking advantage of the attacks<sup>1</sup>

Nothing happened.

**The >Gard Miracle< on the Caucasus: why the Soviet Union was saved in 1942**

Despite the terrible losses suffered by the Germans during the Winter Battle in the area of >Heeresgruppe Mitte<, the Red Army had - suffered several crushing defeats in the first half of 1942.

In the fighting near Rzhev, the 39th Soviet Army had encircled and destroyed. At Vyazma, the Germans routed the 33rd Army as well as the encircled Second Shock Army under Lieutenant General VLASOV. VLASOV WAS considered the >rescuer of Moscow and was later to play a role on the German side in the formation of the Russian Liberation Army.

The Crimean front was crushed, Sevastopol, the strongest fortress in the world, was captured by the Wehrmacht. During this battle the

<sup>1</sup> Richard MÜLLER, *The German Air War in Russia*, N&A Publ., Baltimore 2002, p. 80

44th, 47th and 51st Russian armies crushed. The Battle of Kharkov succeeded in destroying the 6th, 9th, 28th and 57th Armies, 7 - armored and cavalry corps, as well as numerous divisions, brigades and regiments that had been brought in for reinforcements.

Again, as in 1941, thousands of Soviet tanks and guns and large strategic supplies were lost to the Soviets, and hundreds of thousands of officers and soldiers fell or were taken prisoner

Soviet front in the south was broken through over a wide area, and the German troops meeting no great resistance marched forward in two directions at once in the frame of >Fall Blau<: Toward the Caucasus and toward Stalingrad.<sup>1</sup>

If the Caucasus fell into German hands, the fall of the Soviet Union would have been almost certain - this because the Caucasus meant oil. A fall of Stalingrad would run in the same direction, since oil for Russian warfare reached the north via the Caspian Sea on the Volga, and essential supplies from the Western Allies also ran this way

As mentioned earlier, at the beginning of >Fall Blau< the Russian troops retreated in a disorderly and chaotic manner. STALIN had to issue the infamous order No. 227, which went beyond an immediate halt order and provided for the intensified use of blocking detachments against fleeing own troops. But the demoralized Red Army troops could not be deterred from retreat either by bestialities or by any stop orders. Russians' reserves had been largely exhausted by the winter offensive, the unsuccessful efforts to break the blockade of Leningrad and to save the situation at Kharkov and in the Crimea

With the crossing of the Kuban River, the Germans had broken the last major river barricade. The Wehrmacht could now tackle its real operational objective: the ports of Novo-Rossisk, Tuapse, Sochi, Sukhum and Batumi. After the conquest of the last Russian coastal strip on the Black Sea, Turkey would most probably have been transferred to the German war camp. This would have had incalculable consequences for Allied warfare; the Anglo-Russian positions in northern Persia would have collapsed. For this eventuality, a special unit had already been set up to advance in that direction and trigger an uprising in the Arab region against the British. A closing of ranks with ROMMEL would have heralded the end of the English Empire.

At the same time, ROMMEL's soldiers in Africa were standing outside El Alamein, the gates of Cairo, after their brilliant pursuit battle in the late summer of 1942. Pioneers of the Afrika Korps were already calculating how many bridge columns would be needed across the Nile, and the Afrika Korps soldiers answered the question >>Where are we going?>>: "To Ibn Saud". The oil of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf was within reach. The strategically far-reaching pincer plan to unite with ROMMEL via Egypt in Mesopotamia, starting from the

<sup>1</sup> Paul CARELL, -  
*Unternehmen*  
*Barbarossa*, Ullstein,  
Frankfurt/M. 1963, 5.

Eastern Front, moved into the realm of possibility.

On September 10, 1942, the town of Novorossisk fell into German hands. Thus, the first operational objective of Army Group RUOFF WAS - achieved. The next one was Tuapse. Tuapse was the key point on the narrowcoastal plain and became the fateful point of Army Group LIST.

With a combination of infantry, fighters and mountain troops the Germans wanted to advance over the forest Caucasus to Tuapse, at the same time the mountain troops of General KaNRAD were to push through the 3000 to 4000 meter high passes of the Central Caucasus to the Black Sea coast. Here the target was called Sukhumi, the palm city on the sub - tropical coast. From there it was only 160 ^n to the Turkishborder at Batum

On August 17, the highest point of Suchum's army road fell into German hands. The Germans then advanced into the Klüdsch valley. There,

from the foot of the mountains, it was only a leap to the coastal plain. But this surprise thrust was no longer successful. The Russians furiously and doggedly defended the mountain exit, then everything stopped

Major General RUPP'S 97th Fighter Division had also fought its way to within 50 km of Tuapse, but here, too, it was not enough for the final, decisive jump desperate call for airplanes and the Italian Alpini came to nothing

The air force planes were not sent, the Italian Alpini marched towards Stalingrad to their own greatest astonishment

On the German side, a few dozen fighter pilots, half a dozen battalions, and a few hundred pack animals were missing in the end. Everything was there, but not where it was needed. There was something else, too: on the Caucasus front, the German divisions of the 4th Panzer Army had encountered two fresh, excellent, and completely replenished Soviet Guard Corps, the 10th and 11th. STALIN'S last reserve formed an impenetrable wall! Their appearance at the critical moment just where it was needed saved the situation for the Russians. The Soviet High Command was thus given the opportunity to stabilize the seemingly hopeless situation.<sup>1</sup>

Here again the value of precise advance information about the intentions of the Wehrmacht

How would things have gone if STAUN had used his reserves elsewhere because of misinformation from his intelligence service about German intentions?

Also the >Gardewunder< at the Caucasus was only possible with the help of German treason.

<sup>1</sup> Viktor SUVOROV, *Stalin's Prevented First Strike*, Pour le Merite, Selent 2000, p. 266 ff.

### **Why the Italian Alpini were sent to the steppes - an unpunished tragedy**

When the >Heeresgruppe Süd< fought for the Caucasus passes, only a few battalions were missing to force the breakthrough. The oil of the Caucasus and the accesses to the oil wells of Iran as well as the Persian Gulf thus remained blocked

What was needed, as mentioned in the previous section the Italian Alpini Corps. It would have been more than sufficient with its 60000 well-trained mountain troops to force victory in the Caucasus. Why the Alpini were not used in the Caucasus as originally intended is one of the tragedies of the German Eastern campaign.

By the end of July 1942, the Italian mountain divisions had boarded trains ordered to move to the Russian front. Other troops followed in August 1942.

There had already been delays in the transfer to Russia. Among these strange incidents was that, as with the Cuneense Division, some units

were offloaded on arrival in Ukraine, some south of Uspenka, while other parts were diverted to the area north of Izyum. This meant units of the division were 400 km apart. Significantly, this is reminiscent of what happened during certain German troop relocations and was only the beginning of the disaster.

When the commanding general of the Cuneense Division, Emilio BATTISTINI, arrived in Uspenka on August 9, 1942, he was informed the following day that the Italian Alpine Corps was now under the command of the German 17th Army. It was operating as part of Army Group A (General VON KLEIST) in the Caucasus.<sup>1</sup>

The Alpini now marched undaunted on foot from Izyum toward the Caucasus, while the troops from Uspenka were redirected to the northeast. The Caucasus seemed within reach.

---

The railroad transport to nowhere.

In August 1941 the Italian Alpini Corps was unloaded in Uspenka and Izyum. 400 km lay in between! For the planned operation in the Caucasus, the Germans had no railroad capacity—obviously. After a week's march toward the Caucasus, >higher orders< diverted the special troops to the steppes on the Don. The hard-struggling German mountain troops in the Caucasus waited in vain for reinforcements.



On August 19, 1942, the incomprehensible happened! General BATTISTI - received the order that the Alpini Corps should change direction and instead of the Caucasus now be moved to the flat steppe west of the Don.

For the Alpini, this change of command was completely incomprehensible. They had tons of mountain equipment with them. Each division had 5000 baggage mules, a much desired shortage among the German mountain troops fighting for the Caucasus passes. They were out of place on the steppes of the Don. Also, the remaining equipment of the Alpini Corps was specialized for mountain operations, while anti-tank and long-range radios were completely lacking. Italians had to revert to the system of messengers used in the First World War. Last but not least, heavy

Artillery and the usual motorization for warfare on the plains. The Alpini Corps was of little use in the steppes for Axis warfare.

Full of disbelief and anger, the commanders of the Alpini Corps therefore made the proposal to nevertheless take the Caucasus as the marching objective for the Alpini. This proposal was also initially accepted by the Germans on the whole. Suddenly, however, the Alpini were sent to the steppes of Stalingrad anyway. The reason was allegedly that the Germans do not have enough transport space to transport the Italians to the Caucasus.

This ridiculous statement was met with protest on the part of the Italian officers involved. There are written reports from two officers of the Julia Division. In them they express their opposition to the decision to send the Alpini Corps to the Don. Colonel Pietro GAY, commander of the Third Alpini Artillery Regiment, wrote a letter to the President of the Roman Senate, Giacomo SÜARTO, STATING that it was "animalistic and criminal" to send troops trained for mountain warfare to the Don.

For his part, Colonel General Rinaldo DALL'AIMI, commander of the Gemona Battalion of the Julia Division, wrote to MUSSOLINI on August 27, 1942: "We arrived in Russia destined to go to the Caucasus where our training, weapons and equipment and use would have been eminently suitable and where we could have competed with the best German and Romanian mountain divisions in an almost sporting contest for the best performance. Suddenly we were diverted to the Don region, into flat territory and without suitable armament. We were given rifles from 1891 and four ridiculous small guns of 47/32 caliber, harmless against the Russian 34 ton tanks.... There are so few Alpini. This is not human material to be treated lightly. Indeed, it may come to the point this year that bitter tears may be shed at how the Alpini have been ruined and effectively worn down."

The Alpini now had to move on foot in long columns as in the Middle Ages with their mules in the manner of a large trek towards the Don. 1300 km distance had to be covered senselessly on foot with

Alpini vs kw-2.

Without anti-tank equipment the Alpini had to face the Soviet tank giants on open terrain. In dangerous single combat, the tanks were nevertheless cracked with concentrated charges. For the vast majority of the other Italian troops on the Eastern Front however, the answer was escape (Drawing Hans LISKÁ, in: S/gnafl

mountain equipment in the summer heat of 1942. It would take until well into October for the Alpini Corps to reach the Don River in its entirety. It came as it had to. In the wake of the great Russian counteroffensive in November and December 1942, the special forces that could have brought the decision for the Axis powers in the Caucasus were senselessly sacrificed.

With incredible bravery the Alpini fought off far superior Soviet troops, and it can be said that the Russians would probably not have succeeded in breaking through the Italian front before Stalingrad other Italian troops fought as bravely as the Alpini.

To this day, conspicuously, no one has wanted to take the trouble to clarify the circumstances why the Italian mountain divisions already - subordinated to the German 17th Army fighting in the Caucasus were nevertheless diverted to the Russian steppes.

Here, too, doubts are justified as to whether everything happened should significantly, the names of the senior German officers responsible for the redirection of the Alpini to the steppes have remained unknown to this day.

### **The revolution in the Caucasus is prevented**

The thrust of mountain troops and armored divisions into the Caucasus was to be supported by mountain troops.

In the summer of 1942, the Germans planned to liberate Chechnya through an internal uprising with the aim of collapsing the Russian front in the Caucasus and extracting the huge oil and gas deposits near Grozny, as well as the oil deposits near Malgobek.

The German troops of the III Panzer Corps under Cavalry General Eberhard VON MACKENSEN advancing into the Caucasus were to be supported by secret Abwehr commandos. Their mission was to induce the Caucasian mountain peoples, such as the Chechens and the Ingush, to revolt against the Russian regime, which they hated.

The idea of promoting an uprising of the peoples of the Caucasus against STALIN came from Abwehr II. Stimulated by reports of the rebelliousness of the Caucasian peoples, Abwehr Lieutenant General LANGE CONCEIVED THE idea of creating a force for fomenting uprisings. But Amtschef Admiral CANARIS prevented this and tersely decreed: "War expansion is to be avoided." This seems completely incomprehensible. 1-<sup>2</sup>

In this regard, CANARIS and his leading aide, LAHOUSEN, HAD already been advised by Field Marshal KEITEL IN October 1941 that future Abwehr II measures to seize Grozny and Maikop would be of decisive importance: "The fact that in not too distant a time we would have used

up the last drop of gasoline put the seriousness of these problems in the forefront of all considerations."

Nevertheless, it is a mystery how, in view of this instruction situation, the neglectful treatment of the Grozny problem and the downright bungling preparations of the Germans, for which there was more than half a year, could have come about.

The paratroopers of the 4th Pioneer Company>Brandenburg< were not even allowed to take off to protect the oil refinery near Krasnodar. Their airborne mission, planned for the end of July 1942, was rejected by the Chief of Staff of the 17th Army, Major General HOFFMANN, because the existing 200 paratroopers allegedly could not secure the huge plant site. <sup>1</sup> - The operation failed to materialize, and when the Germans captured Krasnodar on August 11, 1942, the Soviets had been able to remove 600 oil cars from the refinery to the east, while the refinery and oil tanks were thoroughly destroyed. 80,000 tons of petroleum end products fell victim to the flames. <sup>2</sup>

German soldier in front  
of a burning oil  
refinery

In the first operation, on August 6, 1942, Abwehrkommando of the Sondereinsatztruppe >Brandenburg< had been dropped in the greater Maikop area for oil protection -. When after a few days they succeeded in returning almost completely to the German units, the indications of the leader of the defense group, Sergeant Morrz, were dismissed as gossip by the responsible gentlemen at the High Command of the 17th Army that there were still numerous functioning Russian oil production facilities around Maikop. This gave the Soviets enough time to blow up the valuable drilling rigs. The reason for this unbelievable operation can only be stupidity or sabotage intention. When the German special troops of the technical brigade Mineralöl< (TBM) arrived on the scene, they found

they found that the level of destruction of the petroleum facilities exceeded the worst fears of the experts<sup>3</sup>

On August 25, 1942, the Hauptgruppe with First Lieutenant LANGE took off on a jump mission south of Grozny. To the surprise of the German paratroopers, they were fired from the ground during the jump by furious machine gun fire from Soviet NKVD units. Almost all the men landed without equipment and rations. Most of this fell into the hands of the Soviets who were already waiting. The drop containers with the reserve equipment, all the medical equipment and the Russian money carried along largely fell into the hands of the NKVD. The heavy drop loads were so inadequately attached to parachutes that all but two of them tore off the parachutes in mid-air - again, inexcusable negligence. The main radio was also lost in this way. Under these circumstances, it was no longer possible to think of carrying out the original mission. The enterprise, named after the 19th century Caucasian freedom hero SCHAMYL, had failed. Several of those who jumped off were shot on landing. Others fell into the hands of the Russians. The rest took a full 17 days to find themselves. Remnants of the >Schamyl< group survived only thanks to the help of mountain people.

Despite the lack of news about the landing, the Germans dropped another 12 men on August 29, 1942, but they were never able to reunite with the first group and retreated into the mountains.

For weeks, LANGE and the few survivors of the first wave struggled through the country until they managed to penetrate the Soviet lines and regain the German front on December 10, 1942.

The second Einsatzgruppe >Reckert< in Sonderunternehmen >Schamyl<, airdropped on August 30, received multiple resupplies with drop containers and German-occupied territory on December 12, 1942 with sensational reconnaissance results<sup>2</sup>

Command chief Erhard LANGE was awarded the Knight's Cross by the Führer for his bravery. However, this was not put around LANGE'S NECK by Admiral CANAMS, as would have been correct, but by his Chief of Staff, Major General Hans OSTER. There can hardly be a greater irony.

That >Schamyl< was known to the Russians in advance should be clear. But where the traitor was sitting is mysterious until today.

The >Schamyl< enterprise, despite its failure, had aroused great hopes among the latently unruly Caucasian peoples, which were reflected in local attempts at insurrection. The notorious NKVD functionary Ivan SEROV then dealt with the inhabitants of the Caucasus in his own way, leaving a trail of blood in his wake.

<sup>3</sup> Dietrich EICHHOLZ, *War for Oil*, Leipziger Universitätsverlag, Leipzig 2006, p. 116 f.

The >extension of the war< in favor of Germany was avoided - as Admiral CANARIS had wished.

**"So that no one notices anything - why the oil from the Caucasus did not flow to Germany".**

What the French and English had already planned to do in 1940, the Germans wanted to tackle two years later:

Oil from the Caucasus was extremely important for German war planning. In view of the shortage of oil in the German sphere of influence, it was hoped that the chronic German inferiority would be reversed here as a recourse of the war

Already in the summer of 1941 the Mineralölkommando >K< (Caucasus) was formed as a Wehrmacht special unit under Major Erich WILL >K< waited in Berdjansk, 250 km west of Rostov until December 1941 in vain for its deployment.

<sup>1</sup> The advance into the Caucasus planned for 1941 had to be postponed again.

The task of >K< was extremely difficult. One was aware that the Russians would remove or destroy all drilling rigs in the areas to be occupied. Wehrmacht could take possession of them

There were also difficulties in procuring own drilling rigs. According to calculations made at a meeting on March 6, 1942, with Göring's State Secretary Erich NEUMANN, it turned out that a maximum of 75 drilling rigs and 20 melting probes could be procured from the German drilling rig industry in 1942. Another 25 rigs had been ordered and could be delivered by mid-1943. However, the equipment pool was to be expanded to at least 600 powerful rigs and in 4 to 5 years to about 1000 rigs. By the end of 1942, equipment and forces were to be concentrated on the Maikop region for the time being. In a second stage, by mid-1943, the oil fields of Grozny were to be exploited, and in a third phase the Baku area. 1 to 1.5 million tons of oil per year were the target!

was clear to all experts at that time that the planned German Caucasus oil venture under the conditions of the warthe East "was a task such asnever been given tothe oil industryworld before"Therefore, GÖMNG, with the participation of the Wehrmacht or the >Wirtschaftsstab Ost<, had an enormous military-technical apparatus, the so-called >Technische Brigade Mineralöl< (TBM), set up for this purpose: The TBM quickly grew to several thousand men. It was under the military command of Luftwaffe General Erich HOMBURG. He was assisted by Erich WILL, AN expert from the oil sector, as chief of staff.

Then, on July 10, 1942, the >Great Oil Session< took place in Rominten (East Prussia) under GÖRING's direction. Now the production of more drilling rigs was ordered. Manpower, transport possibilities and airplanes, nothing was to be lacking for the TBM.

On August 6, 1942, German troops reached Armavir. The place then served as a base material and supply depot for the TBM.

Krasnodar and Maikop fell into German hands on 9/10 August 1942. As already mentioned elsewhere, the deployment of German special parachute commandos there was a failure, because the indications of the paratroopers returning from their mission to the detectedand still the proof: functioning production facilitieswere dismissedby the responsiblepioneers of the 5th gentlemen as gossip, so that the Soviets had time to blow up the valuable/Eisb.Pi.Rgt3 with Ford V8-51, Büssing-NAG G31 and Russian booty truck with special drilling rigs.Those responsiblesitting at the High Command of the 17th Army!

This incredible event was followed by the takeover of the destroyed oilequipmentfront of wells by the TBM. Already on August 10 it counted 20 killed and 60Maikop in summer 1942. wounded. Under constant fire from Russian artillery and Stalin's organs Why were they not allowed to restore the and with frequent air raids, they had to deal with the restoration andvital railroad to the oil rerouting of the railroad, with bridge, road and path construction to thearea?The lack of railroad drilling fields, mine clearing and the roughest cleanup work. Securitysupplieswas one of the troops and anti-aircraft protection were missing from the war-importantmain obstacles to the project<, as if they had not been available elsewhere. restoration of the former Russian oil wells in the

As if by chance, heavy equipment did not reach the drilling fields for aMaikop oil area! Thus, long time. the railroad was completed only in

Thus, by mid-November, a total of only 17 trains had arrived with the valuablenovember 1942. material for the TBM. One train, for example, had taken 54 days to travel from Wroclaw to Armavir! Here, too, many questions arise. From: Reinhard FRANK, *Lastkraftwagen der Wehrmacht*, Podzun-Pallas, Friedberg 1992.

Out of 10000 tons of the most valuable TBM material, which nevertheless made it to Armavir, only 1500 tons made it to the oil field.

The railroad connection to the Maikop oil area had been completed only on November 11, 1942. This is all the more astonishing since the 5th -

/Eisb.Pi.Rgt3had demonstrably already been in Maikop during the summer. Had anyone prevented the railroad pioneers from restoring this potentially vital rail-oil transport route for the Reich? Surely there had been many more meaningful tasks for this powerful special force!

Thus, the restart of oil production in the Maikop area was under a very unfortunate star for the Germans when it could start after all on November 21, 1942. On the same day, the responsible persons of the TBM had to appear before GÖRING and give an account of their work.

GÖRING WAS described in detail the catastrophic conditions during the reestablishment of the destroyed installations, the difficulties in the area of transport and communication routes as well as the constant enemy action without sufficient protection by own troops.

GÖRING now went into a rage when he discovered that General THOMAS WAS giving "deployment orders" to the TBM on his own initiative. The Reichsmarschall therefore declared the TBM specialists BENTZ and FISCHER TO BE his agents completely responsible for themselves in all technical matters and accountable only to him. Brigade Commander HOMBURG had to create all necessary conditions for their work. These were precisely listed

Now the TBM was finally able to work successfully! The phase from the end of November to mid-January was probably the most successful of its activities in Maikop. Probes could be worked up and brought to production. Drilling work could finally start at one or the other location

end of October, with the last advance of the Wehrmacht, the TBM also reached oil fields west of the pass road to Tuapse

By mid-January 1943, when the area had to be cleared again, it was possible to bring a good dozen reclaimed oil wells to production. However, the total yield of Caucasus oil was only about 1000 tons!

Due to the events around Stalingrad, the Wehrmacht had to start withdrawing from the Caucasus Mountains at the pass road to Tuapse already at the end of December.

Then, on January 5, 1943, General THOMAS held a meeting on the further fate of German oil production in the Caucasus region. In view of the military situation, further operations in Maikop and Grozny were out of the question for the time being. The drill rig deliveries, which were finally arriving on a large scale, were therefore to be forwarded to Ostmark (Austria), Romania and Hungary if possible.

The material for the new construction of the oil refineries in Krasnodar and Armavir, which is already on its way, should continue to run for the time- and this although no refinery was to be built in Armavir at all!



The device was not sent to the Caucasus, where it would have been urgently needed before - but to places where it was not. We already know this system in another context.

But then, on January 5, 1943, one of the typical phrases that characterized General THOMAS' modus operandi was uttered: "The big drilling rig program must be stopped from the >iron side<..., and in such a way that nobody notices anything." At this very moment it would have been urgently necessary to drill more in Romania, Hungary and Austria for new oil wells as a substitute.

In the end, German efforts to exploit oil from the Caucasus region for their own purposes suffered not only from the rapidly deteriorating war situation, but also from many >home-made< impediments. Thus, the strategic and economic conditions in the Caucasus could never be exploited for Germany.

The possibilities had not escaped the German planners. The British occupation officer GUNTHER reported on this in 1948 from his

He had conversations with German oil industrialists and geologists. They told him: "If in 1942 they had succeeded in breaking through to Tuapse and taking possession of the city and the port, the Germans would have won not only the Caucasus oil fields, but perhaps Russia, Europe, and the world domination they were fighting for

These lines show that the attack on the Caucasus was not only about Russian oil, but also about geopolitical moves. Through the Caucasus, access to the oil countries occupied by the Allies, Iran and Iraq, was possible. The peoples of these countries, who felt exploited and subjugated, were only waiting for the signal to revolt! The Wehrmacht had set up a special troop especially for it, which should >promote< the uprising of these people. This unit, too, was destined for a bad fate on the part of STALIN'S German helpers.

### **The fate of the >Sonderstab Felmy< - The misappropriation of special units**

On August 20, 1942, the OKW (High Command of the Wehrmacht) decided to move the >Sonderstab Felmy< to Stalino (Donetsk). The troops were then to be deployed in the direction of the Caucasus.

FELMY'S special staff had been transformed into a corps unit of 6000 men, fully motorized with state-of-the-art armament, including assault guns, armored barrage vehicles, anti-aircraft guns and aircraft. This was the so-called >German-Arab Teaching Detachment<, also known internally as the >Arab Legion<. It consisted mainly of Arab volunteers and their German instructors. The Special Staff included units such as >Sonderstab 288<. Its approximately 2200 men were composed (officers and enlisted men) largely of Palestine Germans. The >288s< were intended for use in the desert between Iraq and Syria in small groups. Similar to Sir LAWRENCE OF ARABIA in World War I on the side of the British, they were to gain the support of the Arab tribes. - However, the leading role of Admiral CANAM's Abwehr at >Sonderstab F<, foreseen by service orders, already carried treachery into the unit before the operation could begin. In fact, most of the missions of the German Abwehr in Iran and Afghanistan failed - due to betrayal

However, the >Sonderstab F< was never to come to the Middle East.

Until then, he had been stationed in Greece at Cape Sunion and, in accordance with his destiny, was to reach the Middle East to fight against the British. Now it was scheduled for deployment in the Caucasus. The special unit was to be transferred to the Caucasus only after the capture of Tbilisi, and from there it was to advance through western Iran to Iraq, with Richthofen's Basra as its objective. To equip Arab volunteers expected there, the Germans had weapons available for a division<sup>1, 2</sup>

According to HITLER, FELMY'S special unit was to be used only for securing the outermost eastern wing of Army Group A north of Grozny. In this context, special attention was to be paid to the fact that "the real task of this unit lies beyond the Caucasus; the unit must not be

used up in more serious fighting

The planned attack of FELMY'S >Generalkommando z.b.V.< over the Caucasus into the Middle East was already observed in August and September 1942 by the air reconnaissance unit 2nd (F) >Ob.d.L.< in 1941 with daring imagery, flights up to Teheran and into the

And they did. German aerial photographs of the British airfield near Samara in Iraq (left) and the city of Mosul in Iraq (right) from the summer of 1942 in preparation for the advance of the >Sonderstab Fel- my< into the Arab oil countries (source: Max LADOGA, *Ein Blick in die Vergangenheit*, Helios, Lohmar-Birk 2011, pp. 123 u. 128).

Gulf region was prepared. The details about these reconnaissance mission only became known in 2011 through a book by Max LAGODA<sup>1</sup>, who flew along as a radio operator - and survived.

The thrust of a motorized German expeditionary corps from the Transcaucasus to the Middle East was thus no fantasy, but would have ushered in the end of the British war-fighting capability. But even if the Wehrmacht had succeeded in breaking through to Baku in the fall of 1942 after all, the Western Allies would have had nothing to fear for in the 1st - Panzer Army, which was attacking in the direction of the Caucasus, officers who completely disagreed with them were in charge. As late as July, the gentlemen in question could only with difficulty be dissuaded from using special Abwehr command responsible for securing the Caucasus oil wells from Russian destruction. A Hi<sup>^</sup>rnelfahrt enterprise to capture bridges during the general offensive

This Sonderkommando, like the >Sonderstab Felmy<, had also been transferred to Stalino at that time.

The >Sonderstab Felmy<, properly deployed, could have become a danger to the British Empire by causing the Arabs to revolt against Anglo-Soviet rule in Iran and, if successful, would still have penetrated as far as Iraq.

This was unceremoniously prevented. The >Sonderverband Felmy< was indeed used up within a very short time except for remnants "without regard to its special values in local battles", as it was later written in the war diary of the High Command of the Wehrmacht.

It would be interesting for future research to take a close look at the - behavior of the responsible **IC officers of the 1st Panzer Army in 1942 in** - this regard. Surprises are not excluded!

### **Was the failure of the Wehrmacht in the Caucasus brought about willfully?**

The betrayed enterprise >Schamyl< indicates that there was a grand German plan to secure the Caucasus and its oil for Germany

Here, by October 28, 1942, the Third German Panzer Corps had taken Shemagala and reached the last major enemy line before the gigantic chain of 5000 mountains of the Caucasus. By November 1, 1942, the 13th Armored Division had reached the Ossetian army road at Alagir, and all that was left was the final assault to get closer to the Caucasian capital of Ordzhonikidze. But this jump was never carried out because the Third Panzer Corps was deprived of forces. Already on July 29, the Third

Panzer Corps lost the 14th Panzer Division, which was transferred to the 6th Army under General PAULUS. Likewise, the 16th and 13th Panzer Divisions August 25, 1943, and only the 13th Panzer Division rejoined the corps on August 26. The withdrawal of the 370th Infantry Division on November 6, 1942, was only partially offset by the supply of the weakened 23rd Panzer Division<sup>1 2</sup>

This and more shows that, despite good planning, the decisive weakening of the Third Panzer Corps by certain forces in higher command positions frustrated the advance through the Caucasus. All the units surrendered from the Caucasus to the 6th Army were to perish in the cauldron of Stalingrad only a few months later, without having made the slightest change.

It is also completely incomprehensible why the valuable Italian Alpini Corps with three elite mountain divisions had not deployed to the Caucasus front. This corps, with soldiers well trained in mountain warfare and efficient stretcher divisions, would have been of great help to the German mountain fighters, and probably with Alpini support the breakthrough to the Black Sea coast would have been successful. Instead, the Alpini Corps was uselessly deployed in the vast steppes of the Middle Don. There the mountain specialists, completely out of place and unequipped for anti-tank defense, lost in the great Russian counteroffensive at the end of 1942. Again, questions arise. This also applies to the German 4th Mountain Division.

**12. Chapter**

**The tragedy of Stalingrad**

**From lost victory to disaster**

## The missing 12 days: Did >artificial< German fuel-gel save Stalingrad in the summer of 1942?

After the German troops had to start their offensive >Fall Blau< with delay against an enemy already waiting for them, the next problem came: considerable misdirection of actually available supplies, especially of ammunition and fuel

Especially for the advanced units of the **6th** Army, this supply delay caused an unforeseen pause. Although the supply calculations were built exactly according to the assumed time requirements for individual phases of the attack, the supply still did not work fast enough. While oil from Romania destined for the Germans, for example, ended up with the British enemy in Africa, General PAULUS's **6th** Army advanced a time only with its infantry divisions for lack of fuel.

When this came to HITLER'S ATTENTION, he became furious and said to General HEUSINGER: "This should not have happened! Investigate who is responsible!"

The consequences of the fuel shortage before Stalingrad were dramatic. Colonel General **Hom**, commander-in-chief of the **4th** Panzer Army, decided on June **21, 1942**, on a rather circuitous regrouping before Stalingrad, the necessity of which was justified by the extraordinary shortage of gasoline. However, the procedures were quite strange. Instead of taking the fast direct route, the **48th** Panzer Corps under General HEIM WAS to be pulled out of the front and moved back **40** km to the Abanegerovo station (!), from where it was to advance north by the route already described twice, via Plan-tador-Gawrilowka-Bassargino, and there establish the link with the **51st** Army Corps. This detour, of course, required a lot of gasoline, and they hurried to apply for the necessary gasoline on August **21**.<sup>1,2</sup>

Then, on August 23, the chief of Luftflotte 4, Baron VON RICHTHOFEN, and Colonel General von WEICHS, commander in chief of Army Group B, appeared at General HOTT's headquarters. VON RICHTHOFEN stated that no enemy was too strong in front of the 4th Panzer Army, otherwise the Panzer Army probably would not have dared to pull the 48th Panzer Corps out of the front and move it back. VON WEICHS nevertheless agreed to grant the request for operating material. VON RICHTHOFEN got the impression that there was a lack of unified command on that section of the front.

In fact, the reference to the gasoline shortage of 19 August 1942 is incomprehensible. The Panzer Corps was at Abanegerovo from 7 to 17 August 1942, so it had enough time to be supplied with gasoline. The airmen of Luftflotte 4 (Freiherr VON RICHTHOFEN) also supplied the tank tops of the 6th Army with gasoline, could have helped with the 4th Panzer Army as well. Freiherr VON RICHTHOFEN then reported the incomprehensible stagnation to the top on August 22, 1942. He knew that the gasoline question was no obstacle.

It was not until August 31 that the divisions of the 4th Army arrived at Basargino by the already familiar route.

The Russians were able to use the 12 days of time thus gained by this >artificial halt< due to an alleged lack of fuel to better organize the defense of Stalingrad.

The 48th Panzer Corps was to play another ominous part in the success of the Soviet offensive to encircle Stalingrad later in the year

### **A clear case of disobedience of orders, or: Why were the >corset bars< not confiscated from the allies?**

In the First World War, it had proved successful for the German side to insert its own units as >corset bars< between the wavering troops of the allied Austrians, Turks and Bulgarians. In this way, enemy successes could be prevented time and again and brilliant victories could emerge from crisis situations and impending defeats.

HITLER wanted to use the same tactics against the German allies Italy, Romania and Hungary in the East in 1942 for good reason.

On August 22, 1942, HITLER had ordered to move the 22nd Panzer Division (Lieutenant General HEIM) behind the Italian front. Already on August 27, he increased this reserve by two more German divisions. Behind the Hungarians HITLER wanted to bring up the new 7.5 cm Pak 40 and the heavy German field howitzers sFH 18.

Chief of Staff HALDER completely ignored HITLER's orders. Neither in his



diary nor in the files of Army Group B is there any reference to these orders. A case of disobeying orders? It was not until weeks later that symbolically weak military E^units were moved to the front sections of the allies. <sup>1</sup>

On September 9, 1942, the Fuehrer ordered the Danube front in the area of Army Group B to be heavily expanded and mined. Reserves from the Stalingrad area were to be withdrawn by the 6th Army behind the Don front and reinforced by Army artillery.

On October 25, 1942, HITLER further ordered to establish barrage positions on the Don River. And only a few days later, the Fuehrer issued an order to transport the 6th Panzer Division and two infantry divisions from France to Army Group B to support the 3rd Romanian and 8th Italian Armies. Thus, the coming Soviet counteroffensive would probably not have been successful - if the orders had been carried out.

The example of the 6th Panzer Division shows how delayed HITLER'S - orders were carried out. The division took until December before it finally arrived in full on the Eastern Front. A grotesque delay!

The order to reinforce all three allied armies with the new German Luftwaffe field divisions was also obeyed as carelessly as the previous orders. One exception was the 22nd Panzer Division, which was then moved to the right wing of the 3rd Romanian Army instead of behind the Italians. It was precisely on the 22nd Panzer Division that HITLER RELIED TO A special degree. One had ^n't been informed of the totally inadequate state of equipment of the 22nd Panzer Division. <sup>2</sup>

In the west, many more fighting force could have been withdrawn, including several SS panzer divisions. Due to Admiral CANAMS' false reports about a supposedly imminent Allied landing in France, they were held there.

This clearly proves that HITLER'S orders to draft German divisions as >corset bars< from the allied armies in the southern part of the Eastern Front were not obeyed. Instead, repeated orders were neglected, their execution postponed, shifted to other command authorities, delayed or >forgotten<

**A captured general staff map from the year 1919 shows the way**

While warnings from German intelligence reconnaissance<sup>1</sup> and the Luftwaffe about the Soviet buildup in the Danube bridgeheads became increasingly emphatic beginning in October 1942, there had been clear advance warnings months earlier as well.

On August 23, 1942, the tanks of the 16th Panzer Division, spearheading

the German 6th Army, had reached Volga River near Stalingrad. Already on August 16, 1942, a yellowed general staff map from the Red Army archives had come into HITLER's hands by chance at the Fuehrer's headquarters in Vinnitsa. This map from 1919 showed how the Red Army under STALIN's leadership had broken out across the Don River between Stalingrad and Rostov and destroyed the >White Guards< of Tsarist General DENIKIN.

HITLER studied every detail of the Russian map with his big magnifying - GLASS and understood that he was in a similar position as DENIKIN. Just like that STAUN could come again!

Study of this Russian fighting at the time reinforced HITLER's concern for his vulnerable left flank even a quarter of a year before the 6th Army's encirclement - all the more so because inadequately equipped Hungarian, Romanian, and Italian units were deployed there. Their fighting morale was also doubtful. The danger was fully recognized.

war diary of the Wehrmacht Joint Staff of September 9, 1942, says: "In Army Group B, the Don front is to be expanded and mined as much as possible; furthermore, reserves to be drawn from the Stalingrad area behind the Don front and army artillery is to be deployed there as well, since the Führer expects strong enemy attacks against the front of the Italian 8th Army in the coming winter to push through toward Rostov."

On September 16, 1942, the same war diary stated, "In view of the enemy attacks expected by ^rn (HITLER) against the Italian 8th Army section, the Fuehrer orders that the 22nd Panzer Division and the 113th Infantry Division of the 6th Army be moved immediately to the rear of the Italian section."

Then, on October 6, 1942, it said: "The Fuehrer expresses anew his concern about a large-scale Russian attack, and perhaps a

Winter offensive in the section of the allied armies across the Don on Rostov. Reasons for this concern the strong enemy movements in this area and the bridge-building across the Don in many places. The Fuehrer orders that Luftwaffe field divisions be deployed with all three allied armies as >corset bars<. This would free up divisions deployed in the front and, in conjunction with otherwise supplied units, could be made available as reserves behind the allied front."

On 14 November 1942, Major Gerhard ENGEL, HITLER's army adjutant at headquarters, reported to Feiner on his trip to Stalingrad. PAULUS also called for substantial reserves behind Italians and Romanians at the great arch of the Don. If intelligence estimates of enemy troop strengths were correct and crisis situations were occurring to the right and left of the 6th Army, wouldn't it be, PAUL said, crazy to hold on to Stalingrad? HITLER had listened to this calmly and questioned General BUEHE closely about the Italian and Romanian anti-tank weapons.

It is undisputed that HITLER was one of the few who recognized the imminent danger before Stalingrad in time. When in November 1942 there were concrete indications that dense night traffic was taking place in the direction of Serafimovich, this was dismissed by the >Foreign Armies East< Division as the movement of insignificant replacement transports. But when the Soviets began building heavy bridges across the Don, HITLER knew better; he had built bridges across rivers himself and knew what was in store. It was perfectly clear to the Fuhrer that STAUIN would strike before the end of 1942, although his general staff completely disagreed.

HITLER repeatedly drew the attention of the army command to these recognized dangers and took preventive measures. However, these were inadequately followed by the General Staff. When he had already ordered HALDER in mid-August 1942: "Have heavy German artillery and Paks move up immediately behind the Hungarian security section," the Chief of General Staff did not carry out this order until weeks later and with forces that were far too weak. Even the Luftwaffe field divisions as >corset bars< were not deployed accordingly. The 22nd Panzer Division and the 113th Infantry Division were not moved to the rear of the Italian section, as had been ordered on 16 September 1942. When the 294th - German Infantry Division was withdrawn from the Don Front, it served as a reserve under the command of the 8th Italian Army. But after November 15, 1942, the division was withdrawn further south. When the Russians attacked the Italians, it was missing.

As the only visible concession by HALDER, THE 48th German Panzer Corps was moved with two armored divisions behind the Romanian front on the Don. However, the 48th Panzer Corps had its own very special meaning. We have already met its leader, Lieutenant General HEIM, in another context.

So let's look a little closer at what went on here.

### **The legend of successful Russian deception :Had the Germans recognized the Russian troop build-up before Stalingrad in time?**

As a culmination of the Battle of Stalingrad, the Russians planned with >Operation Uranus< the extensive destruction of two German army groups, the armies of the Romanians, Italians and Hungarians. The entire southern wing of the Eastern Front from the Don to the Terek was to be

The Wehrmacht could have been defeated in the war. If successful, this might have meant the decisive defeat of the war for the Wehrmacht!

After the Russian headquarters Stavka approved the final attack concept in the last week of October 1942, great importance was attached to secrecy.<sup>1</sup> Camouflage and deception had always been of great importance in the Red Army. For >Operation Uranus< it was to become vital. The problem was that the deployment of the Russian army units could only take place very slowly because of such poor road and rail conditions and the muddy period. The marches took place only at night, while the troops hid during the day. However, the armored and motorized units were not to cross the Don River until the night before the attack, in order to keep the Germans guessing about the final center of gravity for as long as possible. Only the officers really involved in planning the attack were allowed to know of the real intentions; orders to this effect were given exclusively orally or through couriers. Encrypted correspondence and telephone calls concerning >Uranus< were strictly forbidden. One had greatest respect for the German radio reconnaissance. As a cover, an unencrypted directive had issued in mid-October from Russian headquarters to three fronts to cease all tactical attacks and to strengthen their defenses. It was hoped that the Germans would intercept this radio message and acknowledge it accordingly.

<sup>1</sup> Preparations for the counteroffensive began as early as the third week of September.

Overly concerned about early exposure of the plans, STAVKA also had the supreme commanders of the three fronts and their subordinate staffs acquainted with the plan only shortly beforehand. Thus, WATUTIN, ROKOSSOVSKY, and JEREMENKO learned their confidential information about >Uranus< in the second half of October, and it was not until November 3 that a situation meeting was held under the leadership of Marshal ZHUKOV, at which all the commanders-in-chief were told the plain truth.<sup>2</sup>

The Russians were then also convinced that they could successfully hide the planned attack from the German Wehrmacht by their elaborated deceptive maneuvers, and it was enthusiastically noted that the Germans had made hardly any changes in their distribution of forces before Stalingrad until shortly before it began. Nor had the vulnerable points in front of the armies of Romania, Italy, and Hungary been significantly reinforced with German support troops. To this day, many mainstream historians thus assert the success of Russian deception. Even if they were misled by their own intelligence service - were Germans really so clueless about what was brewing in the Russian Danube bridgeheads

at Serafinovich and Kletskaya?

There is a complete distortion of the facts here.

In fact, German observers of General STRECKER's XL Corps had an observation post located at the 44th Infantry Division (Hoch- und Deutschmeister). In a grove on high ground southwest of Sirotinskaya, they had a wide view across the Don River to the Volga. Above all, STRECKER's scouts could see far into the hinterland.

What was seen there was extraordinarily revealing: the Russian was moving troops and material in running transports day and night to the Don, opposite STRECKER's front, but especially in front of the front of the 3rd Romanian Army neighboring to its left. Every evening the alarming reports were evaluated in front of the corps staff. Every morning they were passed on to General PAULUS' headquarters at the 6th Army in Golobinskaya. The reports clearly showed that the Soviets were marching up the left flank of the 6th Army. <sup>1</sup> The 6th Army did not respond.

Russian defectors who arrived at the Italian Alpine Corps told the Italian officers, who denied them, that the houses on the opposite bank of the Don were occupied at night by troops who had orders not to come out by day under threat of use of firearms.

The Italians noticed that the German counterintelligence officers to whom they communicated this information did not appear overly concerned. <sup>2</sup> They had announced that would give more credence to air reconnaissance and it had reported nothing. Herein lies one of the contradictions of the Eastern campaign, for the Soviet buildup did not go unnoticed by the Luftwaffe despite all attempts at secrecy.

In fact, aerial reconnaissance was one of the areas where the Germans had their greatest advantage over the Russians. Despite all kinds of camouflage and tricks, German air reconnaissance detected the huge flow of Soviet supplies and reinforcements and drew accurate maps. This was especially successful in the case of the bridgehead over the Don at Serafinovich and Kletskaya, which were 80 to 100 miles northwest of Stalingrad. Thus, on November 12, 1942, Luftflotte 4's war diary recorded, "In front of the Romanian front, the Russians continue their advance in cold blood. When will the Russians attack?" <sup>1</sup>

Max LAGODA, radio operator of a long-range reconnaissance unit of the Group Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe, wrote: "Between the great bend of the Don and the Volga (Stalingrad) a line was held by the Romanians and Italians, poorly supplied from the Germans.... In fact, the Russians were constantly providing strong supplies there. Our daytime

reconnaissance picked up on all this, filmed it and reported it. At night, another unit reconnoitered. It was the **4th** (F). We often lay together on an airfield and talked about our results. "<sup>2</sup>

In his memoirs, the long-range reconnaissance officer Georg PEMLER also told of conversations with neighboring close-range and long-range reconnaissance squadrons, in which it became increasingly clear that they had warned of the developments in good time. However, no special importance had been attached to their reports of the buildup of strong Soviet forces on the northern flank of Stalingrad.<sup>3, 4</sup>

The trick of letting the armored forces cross the Don only the night before the attack also had a weak point. The tanks needed bridges, and these had to be built across the Don beforehand. German listening devices heard Russian bridge strikes on the Don in the second half of October.<sup>5</sup>

The Luftwaffe was able to confirm this bridge construction. An entry in the war diary of the OKW about a situation meeting at **HerrLER** on November 5, 1942 proves this: "The feared Russian attack across the Don is again brought up. The number of bridges built there is constantly growing. The Luftwaffe wants to present picture strips. The Fuehrer orders strong air attacks against bridge positions and suspected staging areas in the riparian forests."<sup>6</sup>

Here, too, there is no reference to the protective claim that the Luftwaffe did not respond to **HerrLER's** orders concerning Stalingrad.

had been allowed to attack the detected Russian deployment. Rather, it seems that HITLER'S order to attack the recognized bridgeheads on the Don strongly from the air was not forwarded or executed.

Operation >Uranus<, for which the Red Army concentrated 66 percent of its tank forces, was thus detected by the Germans several times already in the deployment phase and reported in time.

Questions must arise here as to why certain gentlemen at Army Group B and the Army High Command did not take advantage of this accurate information.

The Western Allies, by comparison, had won entire battles and campaigns in similar cases (ultra and treasonous reports).

### **Did the intelligence services**

#### **betray the 6th or did >Fremde Heere Ost< and Abwehr suppress existing reconnaissance results before Stalingrad?**

Probably no intelligence service ever misled its own leadership as much as the German General Staff Department >Foreign Armies East< did before the catastrophe of Stalingrad.

Since the beginning of October 1942, >Foreign Armies East< seriously expected a major offensive against the far protruding front arc of Army Group Center, which had already endured heavy attacks in the summer of 1942. Alleged attack sites of the Russians would be located between Toropets and Sukhmitshi, whereby even the southern wing of >Heeresgruppe Nord< could be affected. An attack with presumably inadequate Soviet forces on the Baltic could also occur.<sup>1,2</sup>

GEHLEN and VON DER ROENNE interpreted the undeniable increase in Soviet forces in the bridgeheads on the middle Don from October onward at best as an indication of a spatially limited attack against the sections of the allied Romanians and Italians, which at worst would disrupt the railroad line to Stalingrad.

front of the >Heeresgruppe Mitte< the enemy would find a more favorable deployment area, there a success would be especially desirable because it could complicate the German offensive against Moscow feared for 1943. Smolensk would be a worthwhile target, because it was not too far away, and perhaps the whole of >Heeresgruppe Nord< could be cut off later.



But it got even better. To these incredible miscalculations, GEHLEN added that he could rule out an imminent major attack by the Russians in the south. This is all the more astonishing since most of the formations that the Soviets had made available for their later counterattack had long since been recognized by the Germans.

Especially tragic was GEHLEN'S miscalculation regarding the whereabouts of the 5th Soviet Panzer Army. >Fremde Heere Ost< claimed in all seriousness that it was stationed east of Orel, although German reconnaissance near the front had already detected and successfully reported this army in the bridgeheads of Kletskayn and Serafinomitsch on November 10, 1942. However, Abteilung >Fremde Heere Ost< did not pass this on to the Fuehrer's headquarters. Thus, the entry of the strong 5th Soviet Panzer Army on the southwestern front was missing from HITLER'S situation map. Only three weeks after the beginning of the Soviet large-scale attack it was reported to the Fuehrer's headquarters that the 5th Soviet Army was standing northwest of Stalingrad!

This was supplemented by the message GEHLEN'S and VON DER ROENNES THAT the Soviets had no further operational reserves against General PAULUS'S 6th Army. On the basis of this new false report, HITLER had to assume that the 6th Army would be able to hold the city and successfully hold out the encircled forces until the spring of 1943.

It was not until December 9, 1942, three weeks after the start of the pincer operation of the Russians against Stalingrad, that the Division >Foreign Armies East< considered it possible that the enemy might "under certain circumstances" shift the center of gravity of his force deployment from "Army Group Center" more to the southern part of the front.<sup>1</sup>

Two days after this >masterstroke< the second big Soviet attack under the name of "Little Saturn" took place at the Italian front section and at the Chir front. This second thrust and its consequences probably came as a surprise to the German side because there were false reports on the German side that the Soviets had their hands full to repel the German attempt to decommission Stalingrad.

In contrast, however, the Luftwaffe and the Italians had accurately recognized that the Red Army was about to arrive here as well. Again, it was no use.

The fact is that GEHLEN'S and VON DER ROENNE'S blunders played a decisive role in the battle for Stalingrad. The question therefore arises whether GEHLEN here, just as later VON DER ROENNE in his position as chief of the Abteilung >Fremde Heere West< during the Normandy invasion, had deliberately deceived his own leadership, or whether he was merely

completely incapable of correctly recognizing or assessing the reported changes in the enemy

Admiral CANARIS' defense did not want to back down either. From available reports it is clear that the admiral reported nothing to the Führer's headquarters in the fateful autumn of 1942 suggested a Russian offensive on the Don, but all the more about a major offensive from the Moscow area

was probably no lack of correct information. Many agents had to risk their lives to obtain it, and often enough they lost them. Their negligent or deliberate disregard of sending hundreds of thousands of soldiers to their do

### **Why the reserves had to wait on the Atlantic: fatal misreporting of a combined west-east strike by the Allies**

For the warfare of the Axis powers, an almost lethal combination of failures of the Abwehr and the Abteilung >Fremde Heere Ost< occurred in the fall of 1942.

While GEHLEN persistently predicted until the beginning of November 1942 that the Russian counteroffensive would not be opened in the south, but against Smolensk or even Velikiye Luki (located 1300 km north of Stalingrad!), Admiral CANARIS performed a new masterpiece. His defense presented the German leadership with "convincing circumstantial evidence" that the Western Allies planned a second front not in North Africa where they were already heading with large convoys, but against the Cherbourg peninsula in France

This misinformation was presented so convincingly that, for example, Colonel General FROMM, at that time still commander of the reserve army, said: "If the Cherbourg attack collapses at the same time as Velikiye Luki, it is possible that this will be decisive for the war. This was to be countered.

The reserves were thus not sent to the threatened sections, but were to repel invented >phantom< attacks.

The German divisions remained idle on the Atlantic Wall - far from threatened Africa.

In the East the same game took place: HITLER therefore ordered to send the first three Luftwaffe field divisions as well as parts of the 11th Army to Weliki-je Luki. This was finally - according to David IRVING - tantamount to the abandonment of Leningrad. <sup>1</sup> But an early Russian attack on Smolensk was even more likely, according to information from >Foreign Armies East<. Therefore, the Germans had the 7th Flieger Division and the 20th

Panzer Division brought into the Smolensk area

By this time, the Soviets had long since marched on the Don bridgeheads. Once again, GEHLEN and CANARIS ACTED as the Allies' protectors of interests.

### **Someone did know: was the Luftwaffe preparing the impending Soviet offensive at Stalingrad?**

Not everyone disregarded the increasingly clear indications of planned Soviet offensive from the Don bridgeheads. The war diary of Luftflotte 4, which was responsible for the sector there, reported on November 12, 1942, that parts of the 8th Fliegerkorps, the forces of Luftflotte 4, and the Romanian Air Force were in constant action against the Russian advance.

Two days later, Colonel General VON RICHTHOFEN decided that he personally would also take command of the 8th Fliegerkorps and the Romanian Air Force units once the expected Soviet offensive was launched.

On November 17, 1942, just two days before the start of the large-scale Russian attack, the so-called >Gefechtsverband HITSCHOLD < - a Stuka and a destroyer group - was moved to the sector of the Third Romanian Army that seemed most at risk.<sup>2</sup>

For various reasons, however, Air Fleet 4 was unable to take decisive action against the Russian buildup.

The main force of Luftflotte 4 was deployed on HITLER'S explicit instructions (one of the many alleged Fuehrer orders?) against the last Soviet strongpoints at Stalingrad, rather than against the dangerous bridgeheads at Serafimovich and Kletskaya. As late as November 11, 1942, the Stukas of the 8th Fliegerkorps were concentrated to assist in another futile attempt by the 6th Army to capture the rest of Stalingrad.

Bad weather, in particular, hindered flight activities on most days of the cloudy, wet autumn of 1942 in the southern part of the Eastern Front. In addition, the supply system was again inadequate.

As if this were not enough, Luftflotte 4 was ordered to release several units for the North African theaters of war after the Allies >surprisingly< landed in Morocco and Algeria on November 8, 1942.

The consequences of these measures are discussed separately.

Then, when the Soviet offensive broke out on November 19, 1942, thick fog and low clouds prevented the German air force from effectively attacking Soviet E^inkreisungskraefte before Stalingrad on that and the following ^five crucial days. Luftflotte 4 could fly just one hundred sorties a

day. Only the most mendacious pilots were even allowed to take off in dire weather conditions, and even of them many never returned

This meant that the German air power was still far superior to the Russians at the time, could play virtually no role in the decisive first phase of >Operation Uranus<

It would have helped the German troops in Stalingrad decisively if at least the entry of November 12, 1942 Luftflotte 4 war di had been correct, that ground troop reserves had been assembled in addition to increased deployment. Someone must have lied to the diarists here, because these reserves were not on hand on November 19, 1942.

**The >Deduction to Africa< closer look:  
why the Luftwaffe  
could not better fight the Russian advance before Stalingrad**

Today it is repeatedly claimed that HRRLER's order to concentrate on Stalingrad would have prevented effective attacks on the Danube bridgeheads and the associated deployments of Soviet assault forces. This has already been refuted elsewhere.

However, there was another aspect to this: because of the Allied landing in Tunisia on November 8, 1942, numerous aircraft had been withdrawn from the Eastern Front to Africa. A total of 240 operational aircraft disappeared from the central and southern sections of the Eastern Front. Thus n^more extensive areas and long front sections of the Eastern Front had to do without any air support.<sup>1</sup> This had never happened before in the entire Eastern campaign!

With the remaining 300 operational aircraft, VON RICHTHOFEN's 8th Fliegerkorps could no longer under any circumstances conduct decisive strikes against identified enemy movements and troop concentrations before the Russian counteroffensive began, let alone stop it once it opened.

Despite enemy deployment movements detected by the Luftwaffe, it was precisely there that aircraft were withdrawn from the southern part of the Eastern Front. For Africa, the redeployments came much too late - moreover, the Eastern Front aircraft had no tropical equipment such as sand filters, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Such measures, all of which resulted in Germany's air force being withdrawn shortly before decisive enemy attacks, were not isolated incidents: Moscow December 1941, Stalingrad November 1942, Normandy 1944, and Heeresgruppe mid-June 1944 - somewhat many >incidents<!

### **Foreshadowing: the gloomy mood of November 16, 1942**

Just before the great Russian offensive to capture Stalingrad began, a dark cloud of betrayal and distrust settled the German high command. HITLER had a long conversation with HIMMLER on November 16, 1942, and, according to his army adjutant ENGEL, appeared very depressed.<sup>2</sup> After some time, he had expressed more and more thoughts about his age, his life, and the waning of his vital energy. His "own people" were making his life sour; he also knew very well what was going on in the country. His enemies were getting stronger; the longer the war lasted, the more (groups) were active to destroy him and his work. He also knew that people were already making claims for the time after his death although he had kept their zeal in check until now.

The sad thing about this situation, he said, was that they were not classical communists, but mainly intellectuals, including priests and even high-ranking people in the military. He was thinking about what useful war-related tasks he could find for these people who were living harmfully into the day in Germany without employment, to keep them from doing stupid things and driving others crazy. One should not underestimate him, he knew more than many people thought.

Shortly thereafter, the Russian attack broke out.

### **How the Soviets were regularly informed about Hitler's location**

One of the secrets of Soviet successes was that STALIN's offensives were often launched during HITLER'S absence. This was also the case on November 19, 1942.

Soviet espionage took a rather unconventional approach to finding out HITLER'S WHEREABOUTS: "The socialist son of an Austrian conservative, who lived near the Swiss border on Austrian soil, had been drafted into the Wehrmacht and assigned as a radio technician to the Führer's headquarters. He called his family every evening on a certain wavelength and communicated his location by radio. His father grasped the importance of these radio messages, but could not get them across the Swiss border from Feldkirch without being observed. He or one of his friends buried them at an arranged spot in Dornbirn, where one of PÜNTER'S >Rote Drei< members briefly dug them up again, leaving food and money for the Austrians at the spot."<sup>1</sup>

Nothing was apparently left to chance.

### **Why could the Russian counterattack not be stopped?**

When the Russians >surprisingly< attacked the Romanian Army from their two Don bridgeheads on November 19, 1942, the German High Command could believe at first moment that it had taken good precautions. They had moved a large unit, the 48th Panzer Corps under Lieutenant General HEIM, behind the Third Romanian Army.

The 48th Panzer Corps consisted of the German 22nd Panzer Division, parts of the German 14th Panzer Division, and a Romanian armored division. The large unit was reinforced by blocking formations of tanks, fighter divisions, and army artillery. The armored corps had actually been moved to the area south of Serafimovich for the Russian counterattack.

A German armored corps was normally a considerable force and a sufficiently strong rear guard. It would have been sufficient under normal circumstances to secure the threatened front of the Romanian Third Army against the large-scale Russian attack.

But HEIM's corps, contrary to the plans of the Army High Command, had only been partially upgraded from the obsolete Czech Panzer 38 to

German tanks had been re-equipped and thus had only a few Panzer III and IV tanks. Also, the division had been weakened by other units were used in house-to-house combat at Stalingrad. Much evidence suggests that HITLER WAS KEPT IN THE DARK ABOUT THE fact that the *22nd* Panzer Division had not yet been modernly re-equipped.

For many weeks the tanks of the *22nd* Panzer Division remained idle in their dugouts, and when they were pulled out for a hasty departure after the Russian attack began, 39 of 104 tanks started with great difficulty or not at all. Another 34 already failed during the transfer march. Their engines stopped, many turrets could no longer be turned, and the electrical systems were defective because of alleged mice damage. Mice that had nested in the thatch of the shelters had eaten the rubber cables and disturbed the electrical systems<sup>1-5</sup>

Obviously, weapons and equipment were not maintained or serviced during the rest days, which would have made such a failure easy to prevent in the first place. No similar incident could be found during the entire Russian campaign. Suspicion of deliberate sabotage seems to be obvious. At least the leadership of the division up to the tank commander can be accused of having acted carelessly and thus recklessly such a situation, however, recklessness is to be regarded as a kind of sabotage.

To appalling consequences of this negligence was added the fact that the

tanks of the 22nd Division had not yet received tracked cleats for winter driving. These had long since been put on the road and "got lost somewhere on the long way to the Don".

Panzerwerkstattkompanie 204 could not be carried along because of >fuel shortages<, so that Panzerregiment 204 could not carry out any major repairs en route. Thus, instead of the original 104 tanks as known in the strength reports of the Army Group and at the Fuehrer's headquarters, the 22nd Panzer Division actually brought only 31 armored fighting vehicles to the staging area. 11 more tanks could still be made mobile.

The second major unit of the Panzer Corps, the 1st Romanian Armored Division, had 108 tanks on November 19, 1942, but 98 of them were Czech Panzer 38 (t) tanks, which had already outgunned any Russian tank a year earlier. Thus the alleged >corset bar< was none at all! The 48th Panzer Corps was nevertheless deployed by Army Group B to the northeast on Kletskeya to counterattack, that is, against the infantry of the 21st Soviet Army, which had a hundred tanks.

But even before the corps could get into real combat with the 21st Soviet Army, at 11:30 a.m. a counter-order came from the Fuehrer's headquarters. Attack to the northwest, in the opposite direction - against the correctly recognized - much more dangerous breakthrough of the fast formations of the 5th Soviet Panzer Army. By then, the Soviet tank tops had already broken through the hole near Blinov 50 km deep and had destroyed the Romanian troops on their way. In the forced march that now followed, only 20 tanks of the 22nd Armored Division arrived at their deployment site. Nevertheless, the few old tanks of the 48th Panzer Corps were able to destroy 26 Soviet T-34s in a quickly established front.

But to the right and left of the Panzer Corps the Soviets were streaming past. Instead of intervening, Lieutenant General HEIM now retreated southward toward Chir. Thus, it was also not possible to get in touch with the Romanian units of General LASCAR, who were still waiting in vain for help and were still doggedly holding out in pockets of resistance. Just the >Group LASCAR< was the only brave Romanian unit that day! Lieutenant General HEIM was therefore later arrested by the field police on HITLER's orders, having been accused of insubordination on the part of the Romanians. Background was the collapse of the >Group Lascar< with 39 000 men.

After the announced counterattack of the 22nd Panzer Army to the rescue of >Group LASCAR< had not taken place, General LASCAR had acted on his own. His breakthrough, however, turned into a fiasco: only



about 6000 of 39 000 men reached the German lines. General LASCAR was among the missing.

But not only the deployment of the 48th German Panzer Corps failed under strange circumstances. Attempts by the 6th Army to fill the roughest gaps with armored and motorized forces released from Stalingrad also came too late. Here, lack of fuel and missing chain tunnels (!) had delayed a transfer to the western bank of the Danube to such an extent that it was too late for an operation against the southern Soviet pincer arm.

Lieutenant General Ferdinand HEIM had to serve as the scapegoat for this. In January 1943, he was arrested on HITLER'S orders, expelled from the Wehrmacht and transferred to solitary confinement in Berlin MohabitHowever, he was already released in April 1943 and transferred to a military hospital near Ulm. As early as May 1943, his expulsion from the Wehrmacht was revoked; instead, he was transferred to the Führer Reserve. In August 1944, he was appointed commander of the Boulogne fortress in France, which he was to defend to the last drop of blood against the Western Allies.Arriving there, he found that nothingwas prepared for the defenseand that, unlike other Atlantic fortsthere were no suitable specialists to do the jobNevertheless, the ill-preparedgarrison of Boulognebarely suited for defense, withstood heavy Allied air attacks and To- tal ground assaults until September 23, 1944, when General HEIM WAS forced to surrender with the fortress. <sup>1</sup>

In a postwar interview, General HEIM asserted that the only documentation for his arrest in 1943 had been HITLER'S orders.No indictment, no verdict, or any explanationThus, HEIM'S case remains - mysterious to this day. It is likely that he was meant to serve as a scapegoat for others who could continue to remain in the background in this way and at his expense. It isconceivableHEIM, one of the leading planners of >Operation Barbaros-.

sa<, was misled by other high officers and should be sacrificed also fits assigned with the suicide mission of the >Fortress Boulogne< in order to avoid an inconvenient witness by a heroic death. However, HEIM did not do them this favor and died peacefully on November 14, 1977 in Ulm at the high age of 82.

However, like almost all of his fellow officers, he preferred not to say anything about the real background of the events before Stalingrad in 1942 in the postwar period.

### **Major General Wolski's German >guardian angel<: Why was the enclosure of the 6th Army from the south not prevented?**

When the Soviets destroyed the mass of the 3rd Romanian Army, it became clear that they were going to Kalach and that this thrust was aimed directly into the rear of the 6th Army. Only the high command of the 6th Army did not notice anything for days!

Fortunately for the Germans, the Thuringian-Hessian 29th I.D.(Mot.) was in the way of the Russians. The 29th I.D. stood 50 km southwest of Stalingrad in the steppes as a reserve of the Army Group. It had already been pulled out of the Stalingrad front at the end of September 1942, refreshed and earmarked for a possible new attack on Astrakhan. It was to march off to the Caucasus at the end of November 1942, where it would be ready for the planned spring offensive of 1943. The Russian offensive on Stalingrad changed everything forever

On November 19, 1942, the fully combat-ready division under the command of Major General LEYSER was thrown out of a combat exercise by Colonel General HOTH directly against the parts of the 57th Soviet Army that had broken through south of Stalingrad. Generaloberst Hom did this on his own independent decision, since he strangely could not get a telephone connection with the Army Group<sup>1</sup>

55 Panzer III and IV of Panzer Division 129 now met the Russians and, completely unexpectedly for the enemy, drove into the middle of freight trains that were unloading masses of infantry train after train on open railroad tracks. When the artillery divisions of the 29th I.D. also intervened, the breakthrough of the 57th Soviet Army was radically halted. The Soviet offensive was about to become problematic.

No sooner had this hole been successfully plugged than the alarm was sounded that 30 kilometers to the south at the 6th Romanian Corps the 51st Soviet Army had broken through in the center and on the south wing. Now the 29.1.D. (Mot.), continuing its offensive defense, could have pushed into the flank of the Soviet 4th Corps with a thrust to the southwest and, since the Russian Corps had only 90 tanks, probably could have stopped this breakthrough as well

When Colonel General Hom also initiated this second decisive thrust against Major General WOLSKI, the order came from the Army Group on November 21, 1942: "Stop attack, take up defensive position to protect the southern flank of the 6th Army." To make matters worse, the 29.1.D. Hom's 4th Panzer Army taken away and placed under the 6th Army along with General JANECKES 4th Corps. It is thought-provoking that General PAULUS, the supreme commander of the 6th Army, did not learn, however, until November 22, 1942, that i^m the 29th I.D. (Mot.) was under his command. Imperatively, therefore, the question must be asked who initiated the withdrawal of the 29 1st D. (mot) was initiated by. Lack of reconnaissance results< must not be an excuse here Much more the impression arises that certain German gentlemen not omit anything help the Russian offensive to success At

When the >Falkendivision< came into the cage. Why was it not allowed to prevent the enclosure of Stalingrad?

... on November 19, 1942, the 29th Infantry Division (Mot.) had already prevented the breakthrough of the 57th Soviet Army; the 4th Soviet Armored Corps was saved from the same fate by a sudden withdrawal of the 29th Infantry Division-and thus was able to close the trap behind the 6th Army at Kalach The >Falkendivision< got into the cage of the cauldron of Stalingrad and perished there in January 1943.... this way the far reaching Soviet thrust on Kalach was made possible by the Army Group in the first place.

The 29.I.D. (mot) was then destined a terrible fate. In the steppes in the run-up to Stalingrad, between Dimitriyevka and Karpovka, it was fully hit and destroyed by the major Russian attack >Ring< on January 9, 1943.

Even though the promising second counterattack of the 29.1.D.(Mot.) had been halted by unclear machinations among the Army Group, its surprising appearance had nevertheless deflated the courage of the Russian corps commander, Major General WOLSKI, who had been informed by radio

messages of the disaster of the 51st Soviet Army. He feared exactly what General Hom was about to attack in his long uncovered flank. WOLSKI therefore remained standing, even though his army commander angrily told him to advance further.

Only when no German attack came on November 22, 1942, WOLSKI rolled up again, turned northwest, and only 24 hours later was in front of Kalatsch on the Don River.

### **The bridge of fate of Kalach**

In 1942, the entire German 6th Army was dependent for supplies on a single-track railroad line that ended at Verkhnye Chirskaya on the west bank of the Don. This intolerable state of affairs also concerned the Quartermaster General in the OKH, General WAGNER - but he did nothing about it except to be >concerned<.<sup>1</sup>

From Chirskaya, supplies were then trucked to Kalach, where a flood-protected German makeshift bridge connected both banks of the stream. Because of >wear and tear<, however, the truck supply columns at Stalingrad quickly devent without enemy action. Spare parts from the Reich were >lacking< because the large park in Kharkov happened to lack them. Therefore, the chief quartermaster of the 6th Army had to have the most necessary parts flown in by air.

Who is surprised that the last offensive of the 6th Army against Stalingrad had to be stopped? Even before the attack began, machine gun ammunition had to be rationed.

Although of known vital importance to the 6th Army, no one had found it necessary even to notify the Kalach base of the major Soviet attack on November 19. It was not until November 21, 1942, that the 6th Army High Command realized that there were wide gaps west of the Don on both sides of Kalatsch into which Soviet tanks were advancing. All supplies for PAULUS were in danger!

Orders were quickly issued to build a bridgehead on both sides of the town of Kalach and to set it up for all-around defense.

On the same day the Russians attacked the bridgehead hastily established by the 6th Army on the western bank with 40 tanks. They were bloodily repulsed.<sup>12</sup>

On December 22, everything looked different! At the head of the 26th Russian Armored Corps, a combat group of the 14th Motorized Rifle Brigade under Lieutenant Colonel Georgi - FILIPPOV WAS getting ready around midnight to attempt a daring coup d'état against Kalach. In the early morning hours of December 22, his combat group broke into the German bridgehead position and, led by locals, raced toward the German makeshift bridge north of the village at 6 a.m. with only six tanks ahead of the column driving with its lights up, were two captured German tanks as a bluff. According to other information, all six tanks were Russian.

T-34s.

In Kalatsch, despite the outstanding importance of the bridge, only 25 men of the Organisation Todt (OT) were deployed as bridge security, plus a single 88mm flak.<sup>3</sup>

The German defenders were deceived and mistook the Soviet column exercising their own booty tanks. This is all the more surprising since the German bridge security must have been warned because of the previous attack on the bridge. When the 88mm flak realized the error, it was still possible to shoot down two tanks, but the others had already crossed the bridge and taken cover on the other bank. Thus the bridge was closed for the Germans.

The bridge was not blown up either. Allegedly, one had forgotten to prepare this decisive eye of the needle for a blasting at all.

Only a short time after the successful coup d'état, the main force of the Soviet armored corps moved in and drove the Germans from the vicinity of the bridge.

The fact that the Russians reached the Danube bridge at Kalach and the other bank at all was due to a detachment of Pz. Art. Rgt.

16. This division took up position just north of the bridge and was called upon by the only 88mm flak there (RAD- Reichsarbeitsdienst) to intervene in the fighting in The Panzerartillerieabteilung saw itself unable to establish a connection with its regiment - and did nothing because it had allegedly not received permission to fire. Shortly afterwards, however, the division managed to escape from the encirclement in the direction of Sovietsky with some success.

The artillery unit was under the command of Count SCHWERIN. SCHWERIN, who was part of the resistance, later became known in 1944 for his strange actions in the Battle of Normandy as well as in front of Aachen.<sup>11</sup>

Every attempt by the Wehrmacht to retake the bridge failed. The German forces trapped in the Great Arch of the Danube now lacked not only supplies but also the passage to save themselves.

It remains unexplained to this day why so much went wrong on the German side at the crucial Kalach bridge. It was not only that the vital Stalingrad line was informed much too late about the Russian tank breakthrough. No, someone led Arbeitsdienst men like lambs to the slaughter as bridge security, whereas a strong bridge crew would have been necessary. There was no preparation for blowing up the bridge, and an armored artillery detachment that had moved up nearby found itself unable even to open fire on the enemy it had detected.

That the existence of 250,000 men in the 6th Army depended on the bridge over the Don - at Kalach should have been generally known in high places. Perhaps this was exactly the problem.

The Red Army then also captured a large German depot with 1500 supply vehicles near Kalatsch. They were in excellent condition, but because of the missing of single parts not ready to drive.

Through all these unexplained events, which cannot be explained solely by the courage and luck of the Russian shock troops, the northern and southern Russian assault groups managed to unite at Kalach on November 23, 1942. The trap was closed behind the 6th Army.

Interestingly, the Russian assault group of the 26th Pz-Korps had less luck with its own comrades than with the German bridge crew of Kalach. When they met the Stalingrad front from Kalach, the troops did not recognize each other at first. A fierce fight broke out for half an hour before they realized the mistake. <sup>1</sup>

The dances and joyful embraces of the meeting Russian troops at the enclosure of Stalingrad, as they flickered in Russian newsreels later, have been posed retrospectively. They show how many lies are spread around Stalingrad until today.

### **The sad fate of the 94th Infantry Division - Were there systematic retreats to create frontline gaps?**

On November 22, 1942, when the enclosure of the 6th Army at Stalingrad was completed, General of Artillery Walter VON SEYDLITZ-KURZBACH, the commander of the 51st Army Corps, ordered the withdrawal of the left wing of his corps, contrary to the clear orders of his army commander PAULUS.

This was the 94th Infantry Division, which was in well-developed positions and had not yet lost its supply organization.

The division disengaged from its front as ordered. All bulky and hard-to-carry material was burned or destroyed. Then the soldiers left their bunkers and earth caves and set off towards the northern edge of the city. Now snow holes and icy ravines had to abandon warm quarters.

VON SEYDLITZ DID NOT notify his neighboring units or his commander-in-chief of the evacuation. The Russians immediately seized the favorable opportunity thus presented and pressed after the 94th Infantry Division in nonstop attacks. The division was pinned down, overrun, and shot to pieces by the Soviet regiments that were rapidly pushing after it. The entire veteran 94th Infantry Division perished. <sup>2</sup>

Similar actions included the reckless abandonment of the crucial bridge at Kalach am Tschir and the hasty abandonment of Pitomnik airfield. According to survivors of the Battle of Stalingrad, such as Günter TOEPKE, these behaviors could not be excused, nor could they go unmentioned for transparent reasons or even be theatrically and untruthfully glorified as heroism.

The question is whether these withdrawals to create frontline gaps were not systematic measures. Unbelievable accusations?

Hints in this direction were given by the Social Democrat LEUSCHNER, who testified at the People's Court in 1944 after the death sentence had been imposed that "HINRICH BECK, IN HIS second consultation with him in 1943, when asked whether and for what time the putsch was intended, explained that such a putsch was no longer necessary,

because there were now enough confidants in command posts on the Eastern Front that the war could be regulated until the collapse of the regime: These confidants arranged, for example, retreats of their units without notifying neighboring units, so that the Soviets could break through and roll up the front on both sides. retreats of their units without notifying neighboring units in each case that the Soviets could break into the gap thus created and roll up the front on both sides. These neighboring units were then forced to retreat or became prisoners; that such action had high losses in men and material is obvious." former Chief of General Staff Ludwig BECK, not aware of the failed assassination attempt and the collapsed revolt, took his own life as early as the evening of July 20, 1944. Thus the statement of LEUSCHNER stands for itself. Or does it not?

will probably never be known how many "systematic retreats to create gaps in the front" there were on the Eastern Front.

A striking case, for example, was the retreat of the German 2nd Army in the summer of 1944. It fought in sufficiently fortified positions. Although not attacked, General Henning VON TRESCKOW let his army disengage from the enemy while the rest of Heeresgruppe Mitte stood firm around him.

Even before the first crises, VON TRESCKOW had bent back the front of the eastern corps of the 2nd Army. Frightened reports and retreats without OKH approval did the rest.

The rest of Army Group Mitte which continued to hold out, was less fortunate. Their 3rd, 4th and 9th Armies were annihilated by the Russians. 350,000 men - far more than at Stalingrad - remained dead, wounded and trapped on the battlefields of Belarus. We will deal with this and other incredible background in the following volume.

But we are still in 1942, and it is not about an army, but only about a division.

The circumstances of the 94th Infantry Division's demise in the Stalingrad cauldron also almost went undetected. But even before the leadership of the 6th Army had knowledge of these events on its left flank of the cauldron, HITLER already knew about them. - A Luftwaffe radio squad stuck in the disaster area had given the report to the Luftwaffe liaison officer at the Fuehrer's headquarters, and just a few hours later HITLER radioed to "Army Group Don: "Request immediate report why front north of Stalingrad withdrawn." In reply, HITLER received only silence.

Mistakenly believing General PAULUS to be the man in charge, HITLER, in a radio message of November 24, decreed that the northern part of the Stalingrad fortified area "be placed under the command of a single military leader" who

would be responsible to him for holding it unconditionally in the cauldron. For this purpose he appointed General VON SEYDLITZ-KURZBACH.

VON SEYDLITZ later described it as the goal of his measures to thus initiate a spontaneous dismounting movement with the aim of breaking the entire 6th Army out of the cauldron. As commander of the northern wing, VON SEYDLITZ-KURZBACH would have been able to enforce this even sooner than before. But when General PAULUS personally delivered the Führer's order to VON SEYDLITZ and asked him, "What are you going to do now?" he got the answer, "I guess there's nothing left to do but obey." General PAULUS then said to VON SEYDLITZ in front of witnesses, "If I now resign the supreme command of the 6th Army, there is no doubt that you, as persona grata, will be given the supreme command by the Führer. I ask them: Will you then break out against the Führer's order?" To this SEYDLITZ had replied, "No, I will defend."

But why, it must be asked, did he let the 94th Infantry Division go down there if he did not want to break out against the order at all? The answer is obvious!

VON SEYDLITZ became a Soviet prisoner of war with the fall of the 6th Army on January 31, 1943. There he eagerly cooperated with the Soviets.

When VON SEYDLITZ was released to the new Federal Republic of Germany in 1955, the Verden/Aller Regional Court discontinued treason proceedings against him. The interesting thing about this fact is that, according to an Allied law, the provisions on treason had been repealed during the war.

### **The starving army: the hidden truth about the failure of the air supply of Stalingrad**

Victory has many fathers, but defeat is a stepchild! After the war, no one wanted to be responsible for having caused Stalingrad's air supply, which was so disastrous.

Most likely, the trapped 6th Army had itself considered the possibility of being supplied by air. Successful examples in the previous winter were the air supplies of the Demyansk and Cholm kettles.

Luftwaffe Chief of Staff General JESCHONNEK, who had arrived in Berchtesgaden from his East Prussian headquarters on 20 November 1942, apparently did not reject this idea, for, had he done so, HITLER - would have acted differently in what followed, according to his Luftwaffe adjutant VON BELOW. On the afternoon of November 21, 1942, HITLER therefore decided that the 6th Army should "hold despite the danger of temporary confinement, and that the rail line should be kept open as long as possible. Orders will follow about the air supply"<sup>1-3</sup>

Soon the Air Force began to protest that there were not nearly enough airlift assets available for an airlift of this magnitude. It should be remembered here that the Luftwaffe's transport squadrons at the same time already flying heavy missions in the Mediterranean region in the direction of Tunisia. Field Marshal VON RICHTHOFEN, WHO WAS most



familiar with the situation on the ground, called GÖRING, ZEITZLER and WEICHS TO REMIND THEM of the desolate situation of the transport aviation.

The eye of the needle over the Kalach bridge had been a constant disaster for the 6th Army since as early as July 1942, accompanied by oddities mentioned elsewhere. All supplies to Stalingrad passed over this one traffic. The 6th Army needed 9 to 10 supply trains a day, but in the last 24 hours before the Russians cut the rail line at Kalach, not a single train had arrived.

Since HITLER could assume, on the basis of previous German experience in similar attacks as well as the completely misleading enemy situation reports that the encirclement of the 6th Army would last only until the breached front of the Army Group had been restored and the invading enemy had been destroyed, he gave approval for the air supply.

HITLER had previously reassured GÖRING, whereupon the Reichsmarschall promised that the Luftwaffe would do everything in its power to meet the Army's demands. There also evidently was a well-founded optimism on the part of the Luftwaffe General Staff for twice the war diarist GREINER noted that 298 Junkers Ju-52s were available, and that they could ferry about 600 tons a day. This contained some margin of safety, for it was agreed on November 25 that the amount of 300 tons of supplies daily was sufficient to hold out the 6th Army at Stalingrad. In the postwar period, however, GREINER improved his records after the fact by writing: "There are only 298 transport planes at Luftflotte 4; about 500 are needed."

The decisive responsible persons, except VON REICHTHOFEN, were then also in agreement that it could work. On November 29, the situation meeting minutes thus let out that General - VON MANSTEIN, chief of Heeresgruppe Don, was also of the same opinion as HITLER: "Assessment of the situation by Generalfeldmarschall VON MANSTEIN, corresponded to the same result as Führer." This compromising sentence was completely deleted by GREINER in his improved text of 1945.

It is therefore worth taking a look at the real situation. Of course, the realities of the winter of 1942/43 were quite different from those during the successful airlift to Demyansk previous winter<sup>1</sup>

Not all circumstances were against the Germans. For example, there was only one airfield in the Demyansk basin through which all supplies had to pass. It was a former Soviet airfield, about 30 meters wide and 600 meters long. No other aids were available. Navigational aids and beacons were completely absent.

Although the Luftwaffe and the Army lacked all experience supplying trapped troops that time, an average of 273 tons of supplies into Demyansk every day. This was almost equal to the amount planned for Stalingrad.

Compared to Demyansk, airfield conditions in Stalingrad were much better. Within the cauldron existed six airfields - Pitomnik, Gumrak, Bolshaya, Osinka, Bassargino, Stalingradsky and Voropovno. Although only Pitomnik, 12 miles west of

Stalingrad, was designed to handle transport traffic during the night, but the number of numerous land

airfields in Demjansk, where was only one landing field more Soviet than the Soviet. The Russians knew in advance exactly where the heavy Luftwaffe transport planes would have to land and take off.

The Germans had also provided Pitomnik with state-of-the-art equipment. For example, the airfield had X and Y radios that enabled precise approaches even in bad weather and at night. Thus, flights to Stalingrad could be made around the clock and in any weather - at least as long as Pitomnik was in German hands. Also, it is always stated today that the bad weather conditions - as well as the spare parts situation limited the number of possible flights.

A Ju-52 transport is refueled for a new mission. GÖRING had promised HITLER that the Luftwaffe would supply the defenders of Stalingrad with everything they needed - which initially seemed

This greatly reduced the number of supply flights to the besieged fortress. However, the same conditions prevailed at Demjansk the previous winter. In addition, the Luftwaffe's transport planes had better engine and aircraft refueling capabilities in the winter of 1942-43 than in 1941.

One of the major drawbacks of the Stalingrad airlift was the distance between the trapped troops and the German front. When the airlift began, the transport planes had to fly at least 75 miles over Russian-occupied territory, where they were exposed to ground fire.

The Ju-52 and He-III aircraft were to be accompanied by Luftwaffe fighters. The problem, however, was that the Germans had to launch the fighters from airfields 130 miles from the Kessel. Since the BF-109 G-2 had an average

combat range of 300 to 400 miles and had to fly at reduced speed because of the slow transport planes, they could make only very limited escort flights to Stalingrad. Then, when the transport planes flew detours to avoid Russian fighters or flak concentrations, the fighters could be caught outside of

of their fuel supply and had to make an emergency landing over Russian territory.

Another problem was that the Luftwaffe was apparently unable to provide radio communication between the BF-109 escorts and the transport planes. This led all too easily in bad weather, as was often the case in the winter of 1942/43, to the BF-109s and Junkers Ju-52s being unable to find each other at rendezvous points. One of the most tragic and unbelievable failures of the Stalingrad airlift was that, although auxiliary tanks for the BF-109s were also available on the Eastern Front, they not arrive at the fighter squadrons >unknown reasons until late January 1943, just before the surrender of Stalingrad. Not a single one was delivered before that!

As an emergency solution, Major WILCKE, the German fighter commander of the 8th Fighter Corps, tried to station a detachment of JG-3 as >Platzschutzstaffel Pitomnik< inside the cauldron. The members of the >Platzschutzstaffel Pitomnik< quickly achieved large kill numbers! as well as the 1st and 3rd /JG-3 >Udet< ^^ immediately available for fighter protection. When the airlift operation to Stalingrad began, the staff were protection. These units were reinforced by the 2nd /JG-52 on 26 November 1942 and the 2nd /JG-3. In addition to these units, a Romanian BF-109 fighter group and the ZG1 destroyer group with its long-range BF-110s could also be used for escort missions into the Stalingrad cauldron. However, the ZG1 in particular was >overlooked< until it was too late for effective use

The German soldiers were somewhat better equipped than in the first winter of 1941/42, but they had not expected encirclement in Stalingrad so reserves were more than scarce.

On November 25, 1942, Göring had promised to have 500 tons of supplies delivered daily to Stalingrad by the Luftwaffe. Theoretically, this could also be achieved, even if about 280 Junkers Ju-52 transport aircraft were withdrawn to Africa

At that time, there were about 750 Ju-52s in Luftwaffe service. 298 of them were designated as immediately available for the airlift of Stalingrad designated. When various liaison and ambulance aircraft were added, some 320 Ju-52s were available by the end of November 1942. In addition, there was the Z.b.V.S. combat group with 30 Heinkel He-111s for transport tasks.

Since the Ju-52s could carry two tons of supplies per transport flight and the He-111s a total of 1.2 tons, it was necessary, in purely mathematical terms, for each aircraft to make just one flight a day in order to fulfill GÖRING'S commitment. In addition, each aircraft theoretically had the opportunity to make at least two such resupply flights daily. Thus the Germans had every reason to be realistic about the success of the airlift.

In fact, however, everything did not work from the very beginning. Thus, between November 25 and 29, 1942, the daily average of supplies flown in

did not exceed 53.8 tons To improve these ridiculously low figures, it was decided to use all the He-111 bombers of Luftflotte 4 as additional transport aircraft for the airlift. In addition, numerous Italian Savoia SM-81 and Fiat BR-20M transport planes and three Romanian Junkers Ju-52s

Now it took revenge for the fact that the 6th Army had received far too few supplies only via Kalatsch before! situation for the trapped quickly became so bad that on 26 November in the cauldron of Stalingrad the rations had to be reduced by 50 percent From January 5, 1943, the 6th Army was then practically immobile and in places could not even maintain its own supply operations

In its desperation to do something about the impending shortage, the Luftwaffe sent every available aircraft to Stalingrad for resupply This included not only 10 groups of Ju-52s and four squadrons of He-111s, but also two groups of Junkers Ju-86s, a squadron of He-177s, a long-range transport unit of Focke-Wulff ^W-200s, Ju-90s and Ju-290s, but also all sorts of prototypes such as the Arado Ar-232, old versions of the He- 111 and various types of training aircraft Thus, about 500 aircraft assembled Soon, however, a massive shortage of spare parts occurred, and often the ground crew men had to assemble a functional aircraft from several planes use

Again and again there were supply problems in stocking the airfields with all kinds of equipment as well as heating devices, which possibly fell into the hands of the advancing enemy as soon as they arrived. numbers of transport planes taking off each day not only decreased due to accidents and increasing enemy defenses, but the fighting spirit of the crews had been damaged to such an extent that many an airman abandoned the mission before he reached Stalingrad only to report on his return that he had had engine Further similar events can be suspected!

A decisive catastrophe occurred on December 23, 1942, when the Tatsinskaya and Morovskaya supply bases, so crucial for the supply of Stalingrad, fell into the hands of the Russian tank general BADANOV . - Although German aerial reconnaissance closely observed the advance of Russian tanks on the airfields, the order to evacuate the airfields came much too late Thus Tatsinskaya was cleared only when there was no doubt that Russian tanks were preparing to take Thus, Ju-52s and Ju-86s were taking off when enemy tanks appeared on the tarmac and fired on the aircraft. 109 Ju-52s and 16 Ju-86s managed to fly out at the very last second, 60 aircraft were lost All spare parts as well as valuable ground service equipment had to be left behind Large quantities of supplies and, tragically, many wounded who had hoped to be transported westward also fell into the hands of the Russians, never to be seen

The Chief of Staff of Luftflotte 4 had allowed the clearance much too late, since HITLER'S order stipulated that the airfields were to be abandoned only when enemy artillery fire was on the sites. However, Max LAGODA, whose long-range reconnaissance planes were also at Tatsinskaya and took off in time, reported that Russian artillery fire had already been on the airfield a day earlier - and yet no permission was given for the transports to vacate, even though HITLER'S order would now have permitted it. <sup>1</sup>

When German tanks recaptured the airport after about 8 days, nothing was left intact and everything was just a pile of rubble

The new launching base of the Ju-52 and Ju-86 units was now called Salsk and was 250 miles from the cauldron of Stalingrad. However, not only did the number of transport flights to Stalingrad decrease but also the goods transported gave the trapped 6th Army every reason to complain. In fact, some transport planes on their perilous flights brought roofing felt and old newspapers instead of much-needed food. Watery rye bread flown to be rebuilt before it could be used

to be thawed. There were huge stocks of wheat flour and butter at Rostov not allowed to be distributed! Instead, frozen fresh meat and tons of canned vegetables arrived by air transport instead of power food. It, too, was ready and waiting.

It is not surprising, then, that the Luftwaffe was accused of treason by General PAULUS and others in the 6th Army as soon as the air supply began. On three days no supply at all could be carried out because of the weather. After all, the highest supply ever achieved in one day was 290 tons on December 19, 1942. In the period from December 12 to 21, the air corps recorded a peak with an average daily output of 137.7 tons, which thereafter dropped off considerably, due to the loss of Tatsinskaya (December 24, 1942) and Morovskaya (January 2, 1943) airfields.

Therefore, on the evening of January 14, 1943, when the Russian recapture of Unternehmen Ring was underway in Stalingrad, General MILCH was ordered by HITLER to organize supplies for the 6th Army. The last good airfield of the fortress at Pitomnik was about to fall into the hands of the Soviets. He told MILCH that he could beat himself for not having gone for him before, but the Reichsmarschall had not wanted to.

Among the transport pilots before Stalingrad, the news that the capable organizer MILCH was on his way to them was not received very enthusiastically. When MILCH arrived, he still had 140 Ju-52s (only 15 operational), 140 He-111s (41 operational), and 20 FW-200s (1 operational) at his disposal. That evening, only 7 Ju-52s and 11 He-111s were scheduled to fly to Stalingrad<sup>1</sup>

Strange things had also happened in the cauldron of Stalingrad. Although the loss of the main landing base at Pitomnik was imminent, the 6th Army had ignored earlier attempts by the Luftwaffe to make the Gumrak site ready for air supply use. They had prepared the site for night landings, and they apparently were not even willing or able to adequately level the snow or remove the many bomb craters made the runway almost unusable. Thus, many crews refused to land there. MILCH learned from General FIEBIGER that there was clearly something wrong at Stalingrad: several He-111s, despite all the dangers, actually landed in

Gumrak had landed, had found no ground organization and no one from the 6th Army had taken any interest in their cargo. The food they had on board was handed to soldiers who were passing by, and some wounded were flown back. The crews also reported they had seen no Russian tanks in front of the fortress and perceived no major fighting. MILCH therefore ordered experienced Luftwaffe officers to be sent to Gumrak the next morning to inspect the faulty organization and prepare possible drop zones and a landing area. Despite claims from the fortress that Gumrak was capable of night flying, 27 He-111s flew over Gumrak again and again at the lowest altitude during the following night without being able to wa^nahme a landing beacon. On General MILCH's orders, three more He-111s took off at dawn the following day in dense ground fog, each carrying an officer and equipment for runway lighting, to finally make Gumrak capable of night operations.

On the morning of January 18, 1943, the air transport leader in charge reported to MILCH. He made excuses for the performance of his men. When MILCH asked if he had any demands, the colonel replied in the negative. It then turned out that they had not even heard of the cold start procedure. So more than a hundred Ju-52 transports just stood there only three of them flying.

From that moment on, MILCH realized that the Luftwaffe had indeed abandoned the 6th Army. For wholly inexcusable reasons, certain gentlemen had not taken the necessary organizational measures. The chief of staff primarily responsible for this was soon replaced by RICHTHOFEN. For the rest, MILCH kept to himself what he had learned here about the culprits.

Then, on HITLER's orders, Panzer General HUBE was flown out of the fortress of Stalingrad. On the morning of January 19, he reported to MILCH. HUBE convincingly complained that many transport planes landed in Pitomnik were only half full, while other planes had brought unneeded things. Unbelievable conditions!

Alarmed by HUBE's complaint, MILCH had some of the containers opened at the loading airfields. Many sacks contained only fishmeal. >>We let the drop bags go back, of course, with the request to the Army to hang the Provianhnann," MILCH said. And he said indignantly, "If we had not examined the contents of the sacks at the airfields, the planes would actually have flown to Stalingrad with fishmeal!"

Further reports from the fortress were that other planes had flown in a dozen boxes of condoms, 4 tons of marjoram and pepper, 200,000 tomasters and other useless things. The quartermaster general responsible

for this at >Heeresgruppe Don< was a kindred spirit of GEHLEN'S, Colonel I. G. Eberhard FINCKH. FINCKH later became conspicuous again in Normandy for his sabotage-like blunders in supplying the German front. Here, too, it happened that trapped paratroopers were dropped preservatives instead of ammunition and food. When Günther TOEPKE, - right-hand man of General PAULUS' 6th Army Chief Quartermaster, was - sent to MANSTEIN'S headquarters to check on things, he learned that the 6th Army material lying there had not been used for weeks to supply Stalingrad, but other sections of the front. In addition, TOEPKE noticed that the commander-in-chief of the 6th Army received only heavily filtered or disinforming news about the real situation. FINCKH told TOEPKE THAT he was doing this to "spare" the people in the Kessel. When TOEPKE finally wanted to fly back to the Kessel, this was refused by VON MANSTEIN, WHO told him, "You've gotten too much insight here.... Continue working for FINCKH!"

Then came the next scandal when Colonel KUEHL, commander of Fighter Squadron 55, reported back to MILCH after a courageous flight with 20 wounded from the kettle, complaining that the supply channel for replacement planes from Germany in Krakow was blocked for some reason. MILCH immediately sent General DAHLMANN on his way to investigate the cause. Somewhere between Germany and the Eastern Front were now also, as requested by MILCH, two fighter squadrons and 50 crews for He-111 and 25 Ju-52 crews. Where, however, no one knew. The bottleneck seemed to be in Krakow again!

After DAHLMANN reported to him that he could not reach anyone and that there were no duty hours or morning MILCH telegraphed to Berlin, requested a court-martial, and informed DAHLMANN, "You are to proceed with this court-martial against all guilty parties. I am waiting for death-



Heinkel He 111 E as a makeshift transport (Stalingrad 1943) Older aircraft types were also withdrawn from school units and used to rescue the 6th Army After the fall of Pitomnik, only airdrop containers could be dropped by parachute over the Kessel (Source: Rode 027)

judgments." Now it worked: Within the next few hours, the chief culprit tried to reach MILCH by phone. The man advised against having a court-martial. MILCH - yelled at him, "Waiving my court-martial is out of the question, since it is there specifically for you!" From that moment on, things worked out in Krakow. Although in MILCH'S files and recollections the name of this man was not published, it seems that the >negligent< was General of Airmen Walter SOMME. SOMME was commanding general and commander of Luftgau Command 8 in Breslau and Krakow.

MILCH'S persistence had ensured that an improvised runway lighting system of 10 tank lamps and a strong radio beacon were now working at Gumrak. Engineers from the Reich Air Ministry such as HERRMANN and BRITH appeared at the landing airfields, and front-line repair and resupply bases were established. As early as January 20, 1943, 30 He-111s landed at Gumrak with gasoline, ammunition, food and medicine. 130 wounded were flown out but only one of the Ju-52s landed.

The >persistent< failure of the Ju-52 repeatedly aroused MILCH'S . Anger, and he threatened to shoot those responsible if there was no improvement. When MILCH investigated what had happened to the accommodations and equipment for the Ju- 52 that had been requested through official channels, he found that the trains had indeed been sent on their way, but somewhere someone had shunted them onto a siding

because supposedly >more important stuff< had to be carried. So there they stood, and who knows where they ever got to.

After Gumrak Square also threatened to fall into Russian hands, starving soldiers in Stalingrad worked to prepare a second makeshift strip of land. It was a flattened field 800 meters long and 60 meters wide. On the morning of January 21, 1943, MILCH received word that a squadron of BF-109 G fighters with auxiliary tanks and cargo trainloads of Gotha Go 242, Me-321, and DFS-230 cargo gliders were on their way. Additional heating equipment for the aircraft had again been sent, and mass production of supply bombs had begun.

^hr of Stalingrad, however, had now expired, the fortress of Stalingrad been split by the Soviets into two parts, a northern cauldron about 60 km wide and 13 ^n in depth, and a southern one in the suburbs of the city. After in the following

When, during the night, only 11 of 62 operational Ju-52s went up again, MILCH threatened the commander of the Ju-52 units with court martial. As a result, during the night of January 26-27, 1943, no fewer than 124 transport planes carried out supply flights: 50 He-111s alone flew 104 missions and 56 Ju-52s flew 60100 tons of food, bread, ham, and chocolate, as well as ammunition dropped over the drop zones which were now marked by intersecting truck spotlights. On January 26, when it was already far too late for Stalingrad, the Reich Air Ministry sent numerous six-engine Messerschmitt Me-323s, four-engine FW-200s, and other experimental models of the four-engine Ju-90 and Ju-290 transports to the drop. Now a freight train with filled supply bombs and a freight train with packaged food also arrived daily at the landing sites. A freight train with cargo gliders also arrived every three days. In Sverevo, 1800 tons of food and ammunition already waiting for air transport to Stalingrad.

On January 30, 1943, German fighters were also over Stalingrad for the first time in a long time! BF-109 with additional tanks and BF-110 long-range fighter!

Under MILCH'S direction, air supply now reached its second peak despite the worst conditions. During the night of January 30, 1943, 124 aircraft flew into the drop zones, and this time almost all the supplies were recovered.

By the time MILCH'S fighters were over Stalingrad at dawn, the last Luftwaffe units were already radioing their farewells from the fortress. During the night of February 1, 120 supply sorties were flown, but the next morning MILCH learned that the southern cauldron of the fortress had fallen. Following night, 98 tons were still dropped over the cauldron, but on the morning of February 2, even the last German resistance in Stalingrad was broken.<sup>2</sup>

The question has never really been asked whether Stalingrad's air supply would have been successful if all the oddities surrounding the airlift had not happened. As it was, it was a completely futile enterprise and a costly one at that: 488 aircraft were lost to the German airlift forces before Stalingrad - many of them not through enemy action. 1000 airmen, including many older and experienced crews, fell.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The last aircraft to enter the fortress was a prototype Arado Ar 232A combat zone transporter, which flew back with an unknown load.

Incredibly, Major General Fritz MORZIK wrote in his postwar work on the German transport aircraft units in the order of the Americans that, after MILCH arrived at Taganrog on January 16, 1943, one look at the real situation at the takeoff airports would have been enough to convince MILCH that with the insufficient resources available no more could be done than had already been done. It should be obvious what may have prompted the later General of Transport Airmen in 1961 to dress up the truth so terribly.

loss of school machines and experienced teaching staff should have particularly bitter effect in the future

When, after the fall of the fortress, General HUBE returned to F^m'erhauptquartier together with General MILCH, HITLER first had HUBE come to him alone and asked whether MILCH had done everything in his power to which HUBE replied: "That and more. If MILCH had been sent **14** days earlier, Stalingrad would not have been lost." HITLER responded gloomily, "Yes, that is my undoing."

Then, when MILCH formally reported back, "Mission not accomplished," HITLER said to him, "Yes, MILCH, you have accomplished your mission, but I called you too late!"

### **How the Pitomnik airfield was lost**

Pitomnik airfield was the most important of seven airfields operated by the Wehrmacht within the city during the Battle of Stalingrad. Flights from Pitomnik went mainly to the two main supply air bases at Tatsinskaya and Morozovskaya.

Pitomnik was captured by the **6th Army** when it united with the **4th** Panzer Army on September **3, 1942**. Pitomnik airfield was the only one in Stalingrad could handle large amounts of cargo. It also had beacons for night flights.

Together with numerous heavy and light anti-aircraft guns, the airfield was protected by fighter pilots of the **1st** Group of Fighter Squadron **3**. Pitomnik was irreplaceable for the survival of the Stalingrad fortress.

Already on January **12, 1943** Pitomnik was abandoned, and for no apparent reason! When suddenly leaving the airfield, not exactly uplifting scenes took place, which justified by any occasion. Far and wide no Russian was to be seen, and nevertheless everything rushed backward in wild flight. Most of them were apparently indifferent to the fact that there were wounded German soldiers on the edges of the airfield and that the Pit-

omnik was used to fly out at least the nurses still holding out in the cauldron

Nobody bothered for a whole day about the numerous nevertheless landing airplanes with vital supplies. The ghostly scene was brought to an end when General Friedrich PAULUS learned of it. He raged, made angry long-distance calls, and the airfield was reoccupied. It has never been known who was responsible for these unbelievable conditions of premature evacuation (order?) and whether the gentlemen concerned were even reprimanded.<sup>1</sup> A vital day's supply was neglected - just when full deployment would have been crucial.

On the night of January 13, Pitomnik was the scene of a tragedy when a four-engine Junkers Ju-290 with 150 wounded on board for the return flight suddenly reared up seconds after takeoff, flipped over and crashed to the ground. Only one soldier miraculously escaped with his life. In the evening of the same day, the last emissary of the Kessel, the first orderly officer of the army, Captain BEER, flew to the high command of the army. At the same time he was to bring the war diaries of the 6th Army to safety.

On 15 January 1943 Pitomnik came under Russian artillery fire. On the same day, HITLER instructed Air Force Field Marshal MILCH to crank up the organization of air supplies for the trapped

6th Army. The Soviet tanks were already half a kilometer from the airfield tarmac that day, and although the air liaison refused permission for all planes to land, four Ju-52s still arrived at Pitomnik on the night of January 16, 1942, two of which crashed on landing.

German transport planes, such as the Junkers Ju-52, tried to bring ammunition and food to Stalingrad until the very end. Especially the Ju-52 units suffered from "peculiar incidents". Drawing: Hans LISKA, in: *Signab*.

When Soviet tanks already rolling over the airfield early morning of January 17, 1943 the reconnaissance planes and Stukas flew out of the kettle. Also, the six Messerschmitt BF-109s of JG3 Udet were able to take off from Pitomnik at the last minute. The BF-109s were to withdraw to the smaller airfield at Gumrak. Five of them crash-landed there in deep snow, since the airfield, in total incompetence, was not prepared for the landing of BF-109s vital to Stalingrad's airlift. Only the sixth fighter was able to turn off in time and, after landing outside the cauldron, reported that Pitomnik was no longer in German hands. They had forgotten to level the runway. From then on, transport planes to and from Stalingrad had no immediate protection from the air until January 30.

After the occupation of Pitomnik by the Red Army, hundreds of tons of goods and mountains of rations were left behind, which were not distributed in the last days. Fact that these food supplies, flown in at

incredible risk and danger, were starving 6th Army, indicates a continuing disorganization in the Pitomnik airport area after the reoccupation in the evening hours of January 12, 1943. It also fits that the sophisticated airfield lighting system with the Pitomnik radio direction finders even destroyed by the German airfield crew before Pitomnik fell to the Russians. Thus, the Soviets were able to use the undestroyed airfield lights into operation and set up a mock installation there. Several German aircrews fooled this and landed their fully loaded planes the enemy. Even a Ju-52 from HITLER's personal squadron flew into captivity this way.

### **Operation Winter Storm: Why did the liberation attack on Stalingrad have to fail?**

Captain TRAUTMANN, head of >Sonderstab 330< was given a delicate task in the late winter of 1943. His special unit, which was composed of members of the Abwehr, Sicherheitsdienst and Gestapo, dealt with the clarification of treason complexes. Now

the >Sonderstab 330< clarified six mysterious events dealing with the failed relief of the 6th Army in Stalingrad because, as was not officially known, the commander-in-chief of the >Heeresgruppe Mitte<, Generalfeldmarschall KLUGE, had raised the alarm and filed a report. <sup>1</sup>

It all began in the late evening of November 22, 1942. Immediately after General HEIM's counterattack had failed and Stalingrad's encirclement became apparent, HITLER and JOOL began to develop a daring plan: Colonel General Hom's 4th Panzer Army was to drive a relief attack against the encirclement ring around Stalingrad. Preparations would take about 10 days, but the attack could inflict a bitter defeat on the Russians, who had not yet consolidated their encirclement ring around Stalingrad. When Colonel General ZEITZLER asked HITLER to order the 6th Army to break out to the west before it was too late, HITLER told him, "We have found a new way out. JOOL will tell you. We will talk further verbally tomorrow." <sup>2</sup>

Contrary to what is thought today, an optimistic atmosphere prevailed - again in HITLER's environment afterwards. This has effectively covered up after the war by textual changes in the few preserved files of the headquarters

In fact, the military situation at that time was anything but hopeless. New divisions were being brought in for the relief attack that VON MANSTEIN was to lead. According to army intelligence reports, Russian prisoners of war had also testified that their officers had been surprised by their own success and were wavering as to how to proceed. Moreover, the supply situation of the

6th Army did not appear to the Führer's headquarters to be as bad as had been feared. Even the objections that there was too little airlift space available were not decisive for HITLER, since he believed that Stalingrad would be reached again in a few days and that the army could hold out until then. The question is whether wrong figures about the situation in the supply area of the 6th Army were already used here.

To liberate Stalingrad, the following units were to attack: the 6th Panzer Division, transferred east from Brittany. It was to lead the relief attack together with the 23rd Panzer Division brought in from the Caucasus, the 17th Panzer Division, the 15th Luftwaffe Field Division and the 1st Panzer Battalion the German Army equipped with heavy Tiger tanks

The 6th Armored Division was originally to deploy behind the Romanian Army section. However, the division, distributed on 78 rail transports, arrived too late to stop the Russian counteroffensive. If the 6th Division had not taken so (conspicuously!) long on the rail transport, and if it had still been able to reach the original disposal area, the Soviet attack >Uranus< might have been brought to a quick end. The 6th Panzer Division had been carefully assembled and trained in the West under the command of officers with experience of the East



and at that time probably represented, in terms of combat strength, one of the strongest divisions the German Army had ever had up to that time. General RAU, commander of the 6th Panzer Division, stated the following: "In the division, tank combat, tank destruction, fighting in the dark in bad weather, and the interaction of all weapons were the subject of particularly careful training. Excellently prepared for its intended new assignment in Russia and animated by a high fighting spirit, the 6th Armored Division arrived at Stalingrad about 10% above its actual level. Its 160 tanks of type >IV lang<, 42 assault guns, and 20 heavy armored scout cars gave the division tremendous striking power. Supply and resupply of the 6th Armored Division were ensured by 4200 new motor vehicles. Command was in the hands of battle-hardened commanders capable of solving any task, no matter how difficult."

The Russians tried everything at all times to stop this division at any cost. Again, they knew suspiciously well what was rolling where. Thus the first transports of the 6th Armored Division, having barely arrived at Kotelnikow on November 27, found themselves caught in a sudden attack by the Russians shortly after they had been unloaded but they managed to repel it. By December 5, the entire division had arrived at the Kotelnikov deployment area.

In fact, the preparations of >Heeresgruppe Don< for the counterattack on Stalingrad suffered growing difficulties. Ever new delays in the approach by rail forced to postpone the attack date from December 3 to December 8 and finally to December 12. Interestingly, it was never asked who was responsible for the numerous delays.<sup>1,2</sup>

Also, the promise regarding the number of reinforcement divisions was not kept for all sorts of specious reasons.

Not to be used for the relief of Stalingrad was sPz Abt 503, the first heavy division with the new >Tiger< tanks. After much toing and froing as to whether the division should be equipped for the East, then for Africa, or again for the East, it was incomprehensibly transferred in a half-finished state to >Heeresgruppe Don< on December 21, 1942, in a lightning transport. The pre-commando reported to Generaloberst HOTH ON New Year's Day and was ordered to help secure the return of German troops from the Caucasus incoming divisions.<sup>3</sup>

Most fatal to the German counterattack was that Colonel General VON MANSTEIN allowed far too much time to elapse before launching his offensive. HITLER wanted it to start no later than December 8, 14 days after the envelopment. VON MANSTEIN DID not start it until December 13. He allowed ten precious days to elapse beforehand, thus giving himself

many chances for success. Thus, the 51st Soviet Army could fully deploy on a front width of 100 km and wait for the German attack. A week earlier it would not have been able to do so, as the Soviet commander-in-chief Marshal Jeremenko assured in the postwar period. Also, the Russians knew two weeks in advance that the German counterattack was coming. Already the 6th Armored Division had gotten a taste of the fact that the Russians had such foreknowledge.

After the launching of >Operation Winter Storm<German divisionsAt dawn on December 19, the leaders of the 4th German Panzer Army reached the bank of the Myshkova River, heavily fortified by the Soviets, near Vasilyevka, the last obstacle before Stalingrad. Here at the Myshkova section was to be the rendezvous point - with the breaking out 6th Army. The German 6th Armored Division established a bridgehead on the north bank of the Myshkova River after a daring night attack. The only bridge across the river fell intact into their hands. General HOTH's tank tops were only 48 km away from Stalingrad and from here they could already see the flares of the Stalingrad front on the horizon.

An order issued on the morning of 23 December 1942 seemed to remove all doubt. This order provided for the advance of all armored parts of the 6th P<sup>er</sup>division another 33 toward Stalingrad in the morning of December 24, 1942, which was Christmas Eve. The armored division was to come to within the nearest distance of the fortress of Stalingrad, in order to reach outgarrison of the fortress no longer sufficiently effective and bring it under armored escort behind the secured Myshkova section

Since German railroad pioneers and railwaymen had long since - advanced the railroad to the Axai River, which had been captured from HOTH, and since several thousand motor cars were available to the relief army, the problem of supplying and removing these masses from Stalingrad could be considered solvable. Preparations for this last decisive advance had been made quickly and thoroughly. Over 120 tanks, for the assault guns, 24 for Panzerwa

gen, 1 gep<sup>er</sup>tes Grenadier Battalion, 1 armored Kradschützenkompanie, 1 armored Pionierkompanie, and 1 Panzerartillerieabteilung were planned as the main force for the final breakthrough on Stalingrad. While the two neighboring German divisions the 17th and 23rd Panzer Divisions and the unarmored portions of the 6th Panzer Division were to hold their present positions, the attack was to be based entirely on the 6th P<sup>er</sup>division.

But then everything turned out quite differently. Quite unexpectedly, in the course of December 23, a second order arrived, which, as in other important fateful actions of World War II on the German side, overruled the first and... required the immediate disengagement of the 6th Armored Division. The two weak neighboring divisions had to take over the 6th Panzer Division's space in addition.

The doom was preordained. At first, the 6th Panzer Division thought that this second order was a forgery. Inquiries revealed the order really still in the night of December 23-24, 1942, the 6th Armored Division had to be taken out and marched to Potemkinskaya on the Don. Here a 400-meter-long war bridge had already been prepared on which it was to cross the stream. After the withdrawal of the 6th Armored Division the Russians immediately seized the initiative and pushed back the other two weak armored divisions. The relief offensive was in danger of ending

A village near  
Stalingrad, liberated together  
with surviving population  
during the Russian  
counter-offensive of  
December 1942. The tank  
is the famous type T-34.  
From: Vladimir KARPOV,  
*Russia at War 1941-  
1945*, Zurich 1988.

with another encirclement of the German troops.

The 6th Armored Division was supposed to stop the Russian push on Rostov. To do so, it had to cover a 160-km stretch at noon on 23 December. In fact, however, by 27 December 1942 the troops on

the mastered situation everywhere even without the 6th Panzer Division. Later Russian advances, which began on December 27 and 28, 1942, were even known December 23, when the 6th Division was ordered away from the hopeful rescue position before Stalingrad.

Colonel General **RAU**, the commander of the 6th Armored Division, confessed shortly before his death in the 1950s that he still felt remorse for weeks because he obeyed the order to transfer at all instead of breaking through to Stalingrad and joining up with PAUL.<sup>1</sup>

Operation Winter Storm<, the hopeful thrust on Stalingrad was to be realized after its failure then in 1943 by an even larger relief attempt with more troops. This was not to happen, because the garrison of Stalingrad had perished by then.

Today, >Wintergewitter< is often described as an enterprise that failed from the start. This was demonstrably not the case. Postponed again and again, known to the enemy weeks in advance through betrayal, the attempt at decommissioning, which was on the verge of success, was terminated at the last decisive moment for unclear reasons.

The fact is that the commander-in-chief of the >Heeresgruppe Mitte<, Field Marshal von KLUGE, was of the opinion that something was not going on properly here and made a report which has been concealed from the public until today. Unfortunately, we have not been able to find the original text of this advertisement anywhere. It is to be assumed that it was destroyed. But the fact that the > Sonderstab 330<, the special unit for uncovering treason complexes, dealt with it shows the direction in which the matter was investigated. The results of these investigations of the >Sonderstab 330< have also disappeared.

### **>Company Ring<:**

#### **How the division of the cauldron of Stalingrad took place**

cauldron of Stalingrad, by its very existence prevented the Soviets realizing their grand project of annihilating the entire southern wing of the German eastern front. The problem was that for a long time the number of trapped Germans had been estimated to be much too small, 90,000 men. The circle of traitors had not >delivered< here.

On January 10, 1943, after a long delay, the Soviets had launched their final offensive, Unternehmen Ring<.

Although the troops of the German 6th Army and the trapped parts of the Romanian and Italian troops were literally starving and had hardly any ammunition left, the Russians advanced much slower than planned. Days were to turn into weeks! <sup>1</sup>

For the Russians, the situation now worsened, as HITLER had ordered the capable organizer MILCH on January 15 to increase supplies for the trapped. What would happen if enough fuel, ammunition and bread again through those trapped the Kessel? Haste was therefore required, for Russians knew from treason sources that many German divisions from the area of Western Europe were already on rail transport to the east. They were later to win an overwhelming German victory at MANSTEIN'S Battle of Kharkov in March 1943.

Therefore, it was necessary to put an end to the 6th Army quickly - and to start at the weakest point:

The defense of the combat section between the 44th Infantry Division and the 29th German Motorized Division was assigned to a Romanian regiment with the strength of 1100 men. In the

The end in the south part of the cauldron (drawing: Hans LISKA, in: Signal). After the division of the cauldron of Stalingrad facilitated by Romanian treachery came the end. In addition to the decline of fighting strength and morale, there were epic scenes of unbelievable bravery for our understanding today. For example, on January 25, 1943, at the railroad embankment south of the Zavitsa Gorge, Generals VON HARTMANN PFEFFER, STEMPER, and Colonel CROME, together with a few volunteers, made the last stand and fired at the attacking Red Army soldiers while standing free. The event, reminiscent of General CUSTER'S Battle of the >Little Big Horn< ended in Russian machine gun fire....

night of January 26, 1943 the whole regiment secretly went over to the Russians with all weapons and equipment

turned out afterwards that the Romanian regiment had a telephone connection to the Russians and was informed about all attacks and advance

resulting 4 km wide front line was penetrated by a wedge of Russian troops, which could hardly be stopped<sup>1</sup> This wedge then led to the splitting of the cauldron into two parts and initiated the end of >Fortress Stalingrad<. There was to be no more replacement advance

### **Could the fortress of Stalingrad have been held until a possible relief**

In early November 1942, it looked as if the German 6th Army were of success at Stalingrad, the >Verdun of the East< On November 9, 1942, PAULUS ordered the last major attempt to take the city. Together with newly flown engineer battalions German troops charged forward and opened a 500-foot-wide corridor to the Volga River. Russian counterattacks failed, and in addition, General CHUIKOV's small bridgeheads to the north of the city were trapped by German formations. The already disastrous supply situation of CHUIKOV's troops became even more difficult because the Volga River gradually became unnavigable due to floating ice floes Only the exhaustion of the German assault troops saved the Soviets. This was also contributed by conspicuous

The last attempt on the part of the Germans to take the city of Stalingrad took place in early November 1942. Here: German soldiers advance through the >Red Barricade< works in Stalingrad The Red Army soldiers initially disrupted the German attacks by artillery fire across the Volga River From: D. ANDERSON, L. CLARK & S. WALSH, *Oie Ostfront 1941-1945*, Tosa, Vienna 2002.

>Munitions shortage< at the 6th Army at the decisive moment! On November 12, 1942, the German offensive came to a halt, both

Pages dug in.

Even when the Soviet counteroffensive on the

19. November 1942 enclosed the 6th Army, General PAULUS WAS notdeterred from fighting by the encirclement. For another six weeks he and CHUIKOV, both badly battered, were to continue their fighting in the vicinity of the Mamayev Kurgan and the >Barricade Works<. German endurance was made easierbecause ice on the Volga River prevented Russian troops from receiving supplies at Stalingrad until December 16, 1942.

Even after the closing of the ring around Stalingradno one in the German high command at first assumed that this could be a protracted crisisHITLER'S decision to defend the cauldron of Stalingrad, not to abandon it immediately, met with the approval of JooL, KEITEL, GÖRING, his chief of staff, JESCHONNEK, and General VON MANSTEIN, the leader of the newly created "Army GroupDon<. All considered the immediate-

The German government considered the 6th Army's early breakout to be wrong and, like HITLER, ADVOCATED "einigeln". In fact, by then the 6th Army was undefeated in the field. The Stalingrad kettle area was large and extensive. General PAULUS' troops controlled a steppe area in front of the city, around which they had placed a defensive ring. Tanks and cannons kept the enemy at bay. Several airfields were in operation, through which the Luftwaffe's slow transport planes could maintain a supply link. Strong anti-aircraft protection and a separate fighter squadron were to ensure the protection of the air supply.

HITLER was assured of a provisional transport link to the cauldron of Stalingrad, which would make it unnecessary to abandon the fortress quickly. GÖRING had assured ^in that, as in the winter of 1941/ 42 at Cholm and Demjansk, he would now also be able to supply the enclosed troops at Stalingrad with 500 tons of goods per day.

Relatively soon, however, it became apparent that it longer possible for trapped army make a successful breakout under its own power. General PAULUS COULD have dared to break out in spite of HITLER'S stop order. VON MANSTEIN, as commander of the >Hee- - resgruppe Don< his superior, would have covered him. Once the ball had been set rolling, even HITLER would not have been able to change anything in the action that was taking place.

However, it is clear that a breakout of the 6th Army would have turned into a >cata- strophic solution<. After the abandonment of the developed good positions, the 6th Army, short of ammunition and gasoline, would have perished miserably. This was also confirmed by similar cases from 1944, where German troops breaking out of kettles were so decimated by the Russians in their attempts to break out only a few remnants, no longer capable of fighting, reached the German lines.

The only solution for the German troops trapped in Stalingrad was therefore to hope for a relief from the outside, which they could then at best push a few kilometers against. After the abort of the German relief attempt >Operation Winterge- witter< on December 23, 1942, the Germans energetically planned next relief attempt for the spring of 1943, in which, in addition to several SS divisions from France, a division with heavy >Tiger< tanks and a >Panther< division were to push through to the trapped<sup>12</sup>. The example of the >Panther< already showed that false promises had been made to HITLER, for when the >Panther< came into its first action in July 1943, it was not yet ready for the front.



It would supposedly only matter that the 6th Army could hold out as long as it did. However, their fighting strength quickly diminished after the failed decommissioning attempt. The food rations of the German soldiers were cut to a minimum: 60 grams of bread and 15 grams of sugar daily. Occasionally there was horse meat. Those who were lucky caught a cat or a rat. Nevertheless, German troops still displayed incredible fighting

From December 1, 1942, CHUIKOV was then able to devote himself actively to the destruction of the Stalingrad cauldron. It took the Soviets a surprisingly long time to bring in the necessary supplies for the attack on Stalingrad. When >Unternehmen Ring< began, Soviet troops were able to bring the steppe outside the city under their control within three days. Inside the city, however, they met fiercest resistance. Instead of a few days, as estimated by the Soviet High Command, Operation Ring< lasted three full weeks. After the cauldron was divided into two parts also by Romanian treachery, the resistance in the north of the city died out on February 2, 1943.

Victory at Stalingrad was dearly bought for the Russians. For a battle fought under the harshest winter conditions against an overstretched front and an enemy whose fighting strength was battered by hunger and lack of ammunition, and whose troops were largely provided weak allies such as the Romanians, Italians and Hungarians, the Red Army nevertheless lost another half million men. But the German losses were also nothing short of a disaster: 147,000 killed and 91,000 captured showed the magnitude of the German defeat.

But while the 6th Army held out to the end in the cauldron of Stalingrad, its perseverance gave protection to the German southern front in the Caucasus. The >Super-Stalingrad<, which the Russians started as >Unternehmen Sa- turn< to destroy the German southern front, ended in defeat.

The fact that General CHUIKOV took a conspicuously long time before he could begin the offensive against the trapped 6th Army at Stalingrad, and that the Russians took so long thereafter to eliminate PAUL's starving army in the ruins of the city on the Volga, underscored that the Russians, too, had strained their forces to the breaking point.

end,almost impossible  
to supply the  
encircled air, also and  
above all due to  
unbelievable incidents. Sufficient  
supplies would  
have been a prerequisite  
for successfully holding  
the fortress of Stalingrad  
until the relief in early  
1943.

Although it is frowned upon by historians to ask the >what-if<--  
question, there is some evidence to suggest that the German 6th Army -  
could have resisted successfully well into the spring of 1943 even after  
the failure of the first decommissioning attempt in December 1942, if it  
had been provided with sufficient supplies from the beginning. It was  
precisely here that unbelievable incidents occurred.

The German troops trapped in the cauldron of Stalingrad saw the  
matter quite clearly. When Colonel Herbert SELLE, engineer leader of the  
6th Army in Stalingrad, was to be flown out of the cauldron on one of the  
last planes as a specialist before the foreseeable end, General PAULUS told  
him as he was leaving: "Say it everywhere you see fit that the 6th Army  
has been betrayed and abandoned by the highest authorities."

### **13. Chapter**

## **The fall of the eagle**

Why the Luftwaffe lost its superiority in Russia from 1942 onwards

## **False Confidence or How the Luftwaffe Prepared for the Eastern Campaign**

HITLER believed, based on his misleading intelligence, that the Soviet modernization and rearmament programs would not be completed before 1943. He was sure of his superiority that he did not realize that Germany's air force was already in the process of assuming the role of David above its rivals' potential in 1940<sup>1,2,3</sup>

balance of power in the air clearly favored the USSR as early as 1940. Germany had produced 1667 fighters that year, a large percentage of which were destroyed in combat. The Soviets, on the other hand, were able to produce 5236 fighters and maintain them until the Luftwaffe fought in 1941. situation in the bomber sector was little better: Germany's 2852 new bombers were matched by 3409 Russian bombers

At the end of 1940, it looked as if the war was as good as over. HITLER - ordered the demobilization of soldiers, reduced production and allowed the resumption of aircraft exports. The production of many types of aircraft was even stopped! This affected the Henschel HS-126, Do-17Z, He-111P, Do-215, Bf- 109E, Bf-110, Ju-87, Bf-108, FH-104, SI-201, B-71, Do-18, He-115, Bü- 131 and FW-58.

As we explain later, this was also the fault of false information from the intelligence services, which had vastly underestimated Russian aircraft stocks.

Thus, in October 1940, as the Battle of Britain was becoming more and more of a draw, the new Production Plan No. 18 had to be drawn up. It provided for the return of proven aircraft types such as the Ju-87 and the He-111, whose output was now increased. However, for technical reasons < the number of new modern Junkers Ju-88s to be produced in 1941 was reduced. Fighter production continued at the same low level of July 1940, despite strongest demand from the front.

It is a fact that Luftwaffe aircraft inventories declined steadily until the start of combat operations on the Eastern Front in June 1941. It was not until the fall of 1941, when the German offensive in the east had stalled, that production figures for fighters and bombers increased significantly

David against Goliath?  
This map shows the  
incredibly large  
disproportion between  
the deployment of  
German air fleets<sup>1,2</sup> and  
4 on the Eastern Front  
and the assumed and  
actual offensive  
deployment of Soviet air  
units<sup>3</sup> of  
>Barbarossa< From:].  
Booc et al, Das *Deutsche*  
*Reich und der Zweite*  
*Weltkrieg*, vol. 4, DVA,  
Stuttgart 1983,  
supplement.

It is interesting to compare in this context the Luftwaffe strengths of May 10, 1940 (attack in the west) and June 22, 1941 (beginning of >Unternehmen Barbarossa")

The incredible result is that the Luftwaffe had fewer aircraft June 1941 than in May 1940. The greatest shortages were in the field of bombers, twin-engine fighters, and ground combat aircraft. Number of reconnaissance and single-seat fighters had increased, but only slightly.

One of the biggest mistakes of the German planners was to consider production capacity of the Russian aviation industry to be low. For example, German intelligence estimated Russian production capacity at 2000 aircraft for the second half of 1941. But the real figure was 9900 fighters, while at the same time only 4947 new fighters rolled off hangars in Germany. But they had to be distributed to three different fronts (England, Africa/Mediterranean and Russia).

This underestimation of the enemy meant that, as over England in 1940, the Luftwaffe was too weak over the Soviet Union in 1941 to achieve its planned strategic objectives.

Thus, in the summer of 1941, the Luftwaffe found itself in the role David taking on the giant Goliath without knowing about his exact strength. But what would happen if the shot from the David's slingshot did not kill the Goliath, but only dazed and wounded him?

### **Were the modern Russian aircraft types known to the Germans before?**

On June 20, 1941, literally at the last possible moment, Luftwaffe airmen received the latest flight identification sheets about their future enemy, the Red Air.

Since the German-Soviet pact of 1939, German military attaches in the USSR had given insight by the Russians into their air armament. They had also observed modern-looking bombers, fighters and battle planes, but supposedly considered them to be imports or replicas of Western designs. There was talk of >Potez<, >Vul-tees< and >Martin< bombers as well as >Curtis< fighters.

However, the aircraft identification sheets then distributed to German Luftwaffe members before the start of the Eastern campaign contained information only about the obsolete and well-known fighters I-15, I-152, I-153, I-16 or the bomber SB-2 already known from the Spanish Civil War.

The rest was vague or contained completely wrong information with blurred photos<sup>1</sup>

But they knew better since April 1941 at the latest. Georg PEMLER, WHO WORKED as an aerial photography and surveying expert at the German military mission in Romania from spring 1941, reported that GÖRING's air force was also active there. In a separate building complex, PEMLER saw detailed diagrams and technical data on aircraft<sup>2</sup> - including pictures taken by Romanian and German reconnaissance - planes during overflights of Soviet airfields - in addition to layout pictures of Soviet air units: "We were surprised at the large number of aircraft types, which certainly gave the impression that they were on a par with our own aircraft. I often had to talk to members of the >Legion Condor<. They spoke almost only of the >Rata<, a very maneuverable single-seat fighter. Here, however, quite different machines appeared: A whole series of pictures of the LAGG1, the Mig1 and its improvement, the Mig3."

The Romanians had given the Germans other details that had provided secret reconnaissance results. For example, Romanian Air Force Lieutenant Colonel CRISTEANU reported that the following new aircraft types had been identified with certainty: the four-engine Petlyakov Ant 42 (TB7), later also designated Pe-8. In addition, he listed the Petlyakov PB100, the later Pe-2, as a new light bomber. Also, the Ilyushin IL-2, a type designed as a fighter and light bomber, had been delivered to the troops for several months.

CRISTEANU concluded: "I am well aware of the high level of training and the great combat experience of the German Air Force. It is equally certain, however, that the German Air Force leadership has no conception of the extent of tactical and operational employment in the event of war with the USSR. I know of no operational aircraft type with which the German Air Force would be able to disrupt or even cut off Soviet supplies in a way that would have consequences for overall warfare. I do not rule out, however, that it will be possible to achieve air superiority in a limited time and space, at least in the initial phase." Those were prophetic words!

Actually, this is how the Germans would have found out everything STALIN's air force offered in secret in 1941. In fact, already since

1940 in the Soviet Union increasingly modern fighters of the types Mig-1, 3, LAGG-3 and Jak-1 produced - until the beginning of the Eastern campaign after all, 2030 pieces. The fast bomber and reconnaissance aircraft Pe-2 (PB100) was present with 460 pieces, and the armored combat aircraft IL-2 with 249 pieces. It is proved documents received the German military mission in Romania were continuously sent to the Reich by separate couriers

The problem here was that this went through Admiral CANARIS' - counterintelligence or intelligence agencies in the German Air Force, where high-ranking opponents of the Third Reich were on duty. In the end, the information thus painstakingly obtained seeped away into dark channels.

A question never asked is why German Luftwaffe airmen and the German leadership were misinformed about the Soviet Air Force's armament status. It could not have been due to lack of, inaccurate, or delayed information, as stated above

### **Stupidity or ill will: How the Ju-88 squadrons were >burned up< on the Eastern Front.**

At the beginning of the Eastern campaign, the Junkers Ju-88 medium bomber made up the main strike force of the German bomber force. Some 15 bomber groups of the aircraft, then considered a wonder bomber, had been moved east to support Army forces at the front

Great things expected of arguably the most versatile medium bomber World War II.

However, even on the first day, about one-third of the 61 German aircraft lost to direct enemy action were Ju-88s. It quickly turned out to be a disastrous mistake to use the heavily loaded Ju-88s directly in low-level flight against ground targets at the front. As a result, KG 51 in the Kiev area lost 50 percent of its aircraft and their crews in a single day. On June 23, Luftflotte 1 reported another 18 Ju-88s shot down.<sup>1</sup>

This misuse of the Luftwaffe's best twin-engine bomber eventually aroused stern protest from Captain Dietrich PELTZ, the highly experienced commander of 2nd /KG 77. PELTZ loudly demanded a change in tactics and in the Luftwaffe's finding. This led to his transfer

still published  
insufficient information  
about the enemy: The  
Luftwaffe identification  
Even in 1942  
book of 1942 only  
mentions single-seater  
IL-2 although the  
Soviets had long had the  
two-seater with  
dangerous rear  
armament at the front  
(Source: **RLM**)



away from the front. An attempt was made to cold-cock PELTZ WITH A - post at a training squadron. However, PELTZ had so many friends that he later emerged from this dispute stronger than before.

Finally, the commanding general of the 5th Fliegerkorps, General Ritter VON GREIM, ordered a halt to these attacks because of the alarming rate of loss of Ju- 88 squadrons to light flak and even small arms fire.

From then on, the Ju-88s were again allowed to operate in the role for which they were designed, and depending on the target, bombs were dropped deliberately from medium altitude in a shallow dive. The results were as good as the suicidal low-level attacks of the early days. The striking power of the Ju-88 bomber units, however, had been badly affected by the previous losses.

The fact remains that the Junkers Ju-88 squadrons on the Eastern Front had to pay an incomparably higher blood toll than the rest of the Luftwaffe in the early days of the offensive.

It has never been further investigated whether stupidity or ill will of certain gentlemen in the Luftwaffe leadership were responsible for this abuse.

#### ***How the Kremlin was saved: sabotaged explosive bombs***

On July 18, 1941, the Luftwaffe attacked Moscow at night with 195 bombers. By April 5, 1942, 87 air raids followed against the Russian capital. The systematic offensive against STALIN'S capital lasted only a few weeks, however, because the Luftwaffe urgently needed to support the Kessel battles as flying artillery.

Strategically, Moscow, as the country's military and economic center as well as its central transportation spider, should have been the number one target for the air force. Instead, only a few

painstakingly rallied fighting units to symbolic attacks against a city almost as strongly defended as London during the time of the >Blitz<.1

One of these symbolic main targets of the German night raids was the Kremlin. A group, the 2nd /KGSS, was specially set on the Kremlin. But the tradition-rich complex of buildings would not burn, although the crews in question were sure to have hit with hundreds of incendiary bombs. The Kremlin roofs, a former German air force attaché in Moscow clarified the next day were covered with such thick 17th-century tiles that the light incendiary bombs probably could not have penetrated.

In the first attack on Moscow, about 300 incendiary bombs and 15 - high explosive bombs were dropped on the Kremlin.40 to 50 Kremlin guards and officers were killed in the firefighting efforts. One heavy high explosive bomb hit near the Kremlin wall, but the thick 15th century - fortress wall was only slightly damaged.

However, many of the German bombs dropped on Moscow did not explode. When a Russian saw one such super-heavy German explosive bomb that had hit the Kremlin, they recovered as contents of the dud a large Czech-Russian encyclopedia and several bricks instead of the explosive.<sup>2</sup>

Thus it is probably one of the minor ironies of the Eastern campaign that

On November 15, 1941, the Battle of Moscow began. During bombing raids, the inhabitants of Moscow used subway - shafts as air raid shelters. From: H. Günther DAHMS, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Text und Bild*, Herbig, Munich '1995.

a sabotaged German bomb probably saved the Kremlin from worse. The addition of a Czech-Russian lexicon was probably intended to suspicion on the Czech side that the sabotage operation was discovered prematurely

### **Shortly before victory: the German Air Force**

**in the East at the end of 1941.**

#### **Despite everything! Victory in sight - or what the Luftwaffe had really achieved**

The war on the Eastern Front in 1941 had few comparable counterparts, both on the ground and in the air, to this day. It fought by the two most motivated armies in the world at the time, under completely opposite conditions and with the deployment of incredible material resources. Both sides fought hard and trickily.

From day one, the Luftwaffe had to fight an opponent who had numerical superiority. Challenged to exhaustion, the Luftwaffe's fighters, bombers, Stukas and destroyers succeeded time and again in clearing the way through Russia for the German armies in the summer and fall of 1941.

For example, from 22 June to 22 November 1941 alone, the Luftwaffe destroyed 2401 vehicles, 234 tanks, 92 artillery batteries, and 21 platoons with only 25 friendly aircraft losses.

For its part, the Luftwaffe claimed the destruction of 519 Soviet aircraft and 83 tanks with 57 of its own losses from June 22 to September 25, 1941.

German reconnaissance aircraft provided commanders with often crucial accurate information in 1941 but lost 300 of their own aircraft in the same time<sup>1-2</sup>

Already on June 22, 1941, the Luftwaffe had achieved the greatest success ever achieved to that time in combat between two air opponents within 24 hours.

1811 Soviet aircraft were destroyed, 35 German friendly losses, 322 Russian planes were shot down by fighters and flak, 1498 destroyed on the ground. When Hermann Göring found this report implausible, he had it secretly verified. But when the officers of his command staff climbed around the former Russian airfields overrun by the German attack and counted the burned-out wrecks of Russian planes, they even came up with more than 2000?

With a few exceptions, the German air force of 1941 had succeeded in achieving air superiority just as it had in other Blitzkrieg campaigns before. Only, the dimensions here were downright gigantic. The fighter squadrons deployed on the Eastern Front achieved more than 7300 aerial victories between 22 June and 5 December 1941. By September 19, 1941, -

the Luftwaffe had destroyed a total of 17745 Russian aircraft.

GÖRING's Eagles themselves lost 2800 aircraft to Soviet fighters and flak in the East in 1941. material losses were to be replaced by the German industry, the loss of experienced flying personnel not. After all, the Luftwaffe had lost 17,442 soldiers (including ground personnel) in the east between June and December 1941. Thus, the operational strengths of the fighter and combat squadrons dropped alarmingly

For the military objective of "nie- derzuring Russia in a rapid campaign", the Luftwaffe had deployed two-thirds of its units in the skies of the Soviet Union in the summer and fall of 1941. The remaining third continued to fly against England in the Mediterranean and along the Channel.

Even if in 1941 the Red air armies appeared on the battlefield with ever new machines, the Germans had nevertheless gained a clear air superiority.

It is also readily asserted today that it was pointless to use a large part of the Luftwaffe for direct Army support in the East instead of massing it to attack key strategic targets such as tank and aircraft plants

However, in view of the lack of a Fe<sup>er</sup>n fighter on the German side, no other decision was possible. Thus, the best possible effort was made and achieved with the available material - at least until November 1941. In countless cases, waves of dive bombers and horizontal bombers were sufficient to clear up crises at the front, and the number of older Russian types increasingly in use at the end of 1941 indicated that Germany's fighter pilots were now able to shoot down Russian aircraft faster than the industry of the giant country could produce replacements.

In short, it looked as if GÖRING's air force had victory in the air within its grasp, despite high losses of its own and the vastness of the Russian theater of war.

Then, when the exhausted German Eastern Army was to bring the campaign to a victorious end with a final offensive against Moscow, everything changed. It was not only due to the Russian winter, which this year affected the airborne operations with unusual severity

### **More than sloppiness:**

#### **Why aircraft and spare parts became scarce in 1941/42**

The incredible effectiveness, professionalism, and bravery with which the German Air Force achieved success in the East during the summer and fall of **1941** is unlikely to have many parallels in aviation history.

Nevertheless, a sharp dividing line runs between the purely operational, successful part of the Air Force and that created or was supposed to create the prerequisites for the use of the airplanes with aircraft development and production!

As great as the successes in the east were, the supply of aircraft not

keep pace with the enormous wear and tear on material. The operational strength of the fighter and combat squadrons dropped alarmingly. military goal of defeating Russia in a rapid campaign was thus je

In fact, even after the heavy losses during the Battle of Britain in the summer of **1940**, the responsible Luftwaffe authorities had made no effort to increase aircraft production in preparation for the Russian campaign.

This is all the more surprising since at least Göring and the later Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe, JESCHONNEK, HAD BEEN aware of HITLER'S initial plans for the east since the summer of **1940**. However, not only numbers not increased, but in the case of the destroyers, a drop in the planned numbers can even be noted within the same period. Here, too, the expected short duration of the Eastern campaign was a justification.

Apart from the unbelievable fact that the responsible Air Force officials did not realize that a considerable increase in production was needed in order to avoid the extension of the air war to Russia, there was also a lack of coordination.

These incapacities caused an ongoing, creeping disruption even of the Luftwaffe's already existing aircraft procurement program. Between September **1939** and November **1941**, it was revised and changed no fewer than sixteen times. 'No one asked any questions!'

So, on average, a program change occurred about every six weeks. Not a single program was carried out as planned! The numerous changes only upset the industry and further reduced the output figures. As a result, the Luftwaffe had to fight Russia with fewer planes than it had to fight England in 1940. Doubts arise!

The quadrupling of aircraft output that was finally decided in mid-1941 was achieved - but not until mid-1944. By this time, however, losses at the front and, above all, fuel shortages meant that even a doubling of the number of missions at the fronts was no longer possible.

But not only aircraft production but also aircraft development could not keep pace with the demands of the front. Despite numerous superior designs at the beginning of the fourth year of the war the German Luftwaffe still had 80 percent operational aircraft consisting of 6 aircraft types: Ju 88, He 11, Ju 87, Bf 110, Bf 109, and FBW 190. Of these, the He 111, Ju 87, and Bf 110 represented one-quarter of Germany's front-line aircraft. Seventy percent of the Luftwaffe's combat strength consisted of aircraft types that were becoming increasingly obsolete and were waiting for successor models - in vain! That something was not going right here is shown elsewhere.

In purely numerical terms, the worn-out units of the Luftwaffe were already at the end of their tether on the Eastern Front by the summer of 1941. They had lost hundreds of planes due to breakage at bad airfields and lack of spare parts. Supplies from the Reich supply due to above-mentioned planning deficiencies

The capable organizer Erhardt MILCH then flew himself to the eastern front with flying,

repaired everything that had broken down along the way, and thus brought in aircraft once again in a violent measure.<sup>11 2</sup>

All this was compounded in the fall of 1941 by a shortage of spare parts, fuel and bombs. It was not only a matter of muddy or non-existent roads and vehicle breakdowns that prevented the war-essential fuel, ammunition and food supplies from arriving on time. Entire loads and trains disappeared. The Luftwaffe supply organization reacted immediately, showing such commitment that Luftwaffe officers, armed with submachine guns, now accompanied the Luftwaffe supplies. It had been recognized that the problems lay with certain Army services. However, since the Army supply officers and Reichsbahndienststellen were not willing to risk their lives to prevent Luftwaffe resupply, the Luftwaffe was able to maintain optimum striking power in the east until the onset of winter, despite lower numbers of aircraft being used.

Only in this way was it possible for the Luftwaffe to achieve feats that are still enviously acknowledged today even by the former enemy.

Nevertheless, at some point the golden scales had to tilt the Germans' favor and the Luftwaffe its bleak and frightening position with regard to the required quantity and quality of its aircraft.

By the end of 1942, the Luftwaffe had lost the superiority with which it had entered the war. It could not have been due to economic reasons, because after the conquest of Europe, much more raw materials were available in 1941 than in 1939.

The question of interest here is whether it was only neglect of duty and personal incompetence that led to the failure of the Air Force General Staff and Technical Office. Eventually, even a court-martial investigation into whether the Luftwaffe had been betrayed by a few influential gentlemen. Only very few people know today that the Luftwaffe went up against Russia in 1941 with fewer forces than it had against France a year earlier.

### **Intentionally withheld new technology:**

#### **Why the >Air Sword< Broke**

Just at the time when the teetering blitzkrieg concept desperately needed air support, the Air Force, until then admired worldwide for its technology showing signs of weakness.

Thus, in early 1941, the Luftwaffe still had to rely on the Do-17, He-111, FW-200, Ju-87 bombers, the Bf-109 and Bf-110 fighters, and the Ju-52 transporter - all types developed before 1936.

A second FW-190 fighter and the Junkers Ju-88 multi-role aircraft were added.

By the end of the year, the situation had become so acute that German aircraft production and the training of flying personnel could no longer compensate for the losses. As a sign of this, in January 1942 training and aviation schools had to shorten their training courses by four

weeks.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

What is incomprehensible in a world war is that in February 1941 the Luftwaffe no longer had any precise idea how many new aircraft it would even get because of the chaotic state of the German air force industry

Envisioned new types, such as the Messerschmitt Me-210 and the Heinkel He-177, threatened to fail, and the new Junkers Ju-288 super bomber whose production was to begin in May 1942, flew only in prototype form. The only new bomber that could be introduced was the Dornier Do-217 to replace the Do-17.

In early 1942, the Luftwaffe received a total of only 100 new bombers a month. The decline of the bomber force was thus preordained

There was also an inexplicable engine bottleneck in the German Air Force. Despite GÖMNG's explicit order of 1938, work on a thousand-engine factory had not even begun. At Daimler-Benz, production of the DB-601 in 1942, but the new generation of engines suffered from delay. In the three years from 1937 to 1940, General Udet had stopped all work on further development of the DB-603 and had the factories carefully monitored to ensure that his order would be obeyed. DB-603's rival, the Jumo 213, had been put on hold pending the Jumo 222. The Jumo 222, the hope of the Bomber B program, had such development problems it did not become frontline capable until 1944 - far too late to be of much use.

Thus, the Jumo 213 and Daimler-Benz DB-603 engines were fully developed, but neither could go into series production before 1943. Basically, it was an unnecessary double development of two engines of equal strength!

The 1400 hp DB-605, the successor to the DB-601, had run into difficulties after mass production had already run out of. Due to overheating of the engine, the pistons and valves had burned out, and some of the best German pilots had already crashed with it. Among them was the legendary >Star of Africa<, Huns-Joachim ^URSEILLE. This seems all the more tragic because Germany's aircraft designers had proposed revolutionary aircraft developments that could have given decisive turns to the air war of 1941/42.

One of these cases is the Heinkel He-105. 01-16 fighter-destroyer, in which Heinkel-Werke had given the Reichsluftfahrtministerium (RLM) in the

Withheld technology for air victory on the Eastern Front (from above): Heinkel He P 1 055.0116 escort destroyer >Waffenigel<.

Arado Ar 240: Only experimental models were used as long-range reconnaissance aircraft or night fighters. Henschel P87: It only made it as far as mockup construction before the project was stopped for flimsy reasons. From: HERWIG u. RODE, *Ce-heimprojekte der Luftwaffe*, vol. 3, Motorbuch, Stuttgart 2002.

November 1940 submitted a design for a combat destroyer, which in its construction and design was a further development of the world-record Heinkel He-119 aircraft. The ingeniously designed aircraft was to reach speeds in flight of between 650 and 720 km/h have exceptionally powerful armament therefore given designation >der Waffenigel< by the Reichsluftfahrtministerium principle, the RLM agreed with the drawing board documents submitted by HEINKEL. All performances, such as speed, armament and range, met or far exceeded the set conditions.<sup>1</sup>

A few weeks later, however, Ernst HEINKEL was surprised to learn that the RLM had lost interest in his project. After consultation between the Aviation Ministry and the Luftwaffe command staff, the project was rejected without any justification. An order even forbade HEINKEL TO continue development work on the P1055.01-16 project.

Arado company experienced something similar with its twin-engine Ar-240 destroyer. For this aircraft, which had no counterpart on the enemy side exception of British >Mosquito<, the production and manufacturing machines were already 80 percent ready when the order to cease operations came. Questions arise.

The Henschel company developed its HS P87 project in 1941. It was a duck-built aircraft, had a top speed of 750 km/h and an armament of four 3 cm MK108s in the fuselage nose.

HENSCHEL's advanced design work and the construction of a full-size mock-up of the HS P87 met with the approval of the Technical Office, but were rejected by "the highest authorities" with the specious explanation that "pilots could not get used to the propeller being in the rear and the tailplane in the front".

The rejection of the Blohm & Voss P170 seems similarly inexplicable. The P170 was supposed to be able to reach a speed of 860 km/h with three existing BMW 801Es and deliver 2000 kg bombs to the target. However, work on the P170 was discontinued at the end of 1942, as the RLM claimed that there was no need for this project.

In 1941/42, the momentous errors of judgment made by the RLM's mainly mid-level authorities affected the entire aviation industry, including the aircraft engine plants.



Was this a case of short-sightedness, lack of foresight, or sabotage? In October 1942, the Gestapo was able to dismantle a large Communist spy ring at the RLM and the Bureau of Aviation Armament 70 people were arrested. All were involved in transmitting vital information to the Soviet Union, including information on production figures and losses. Fortunately for the Luftwaffe, the original German production figures supplied were so confusing that they were virtually useless to their recipients in Russia, just as they had previously been to the Germans.

Obviously, however, it was expected that only the tip of the iceberg had been discovered and that betrayal of secrets and sabotage would continue. So UOET's successor MILCH ordered new precautions for the RLM. Everyone (!) was to be subjected to body searches and X-ray checks when leaving the ministry.

In the problems of the Luftwaffe little changed! For the Luftwaffe pilot, only one thing left to do was to continue flying their old aircraft types against an increasing Allied superiority. Johannes KAUFMANN, who was transferred to Landsberg for retraining with the Bf-110 on the Me-210, wrote: "The Me-210 impressed us greatly. Unfortunately, the briefing could only be very superficial because there was a lack of suitable personnel. We had to approach it slowly in order to grasp new features of the Me-110: learn how to handle it properly. The airplane was much faster, the tailbooms could be latched inside the fuselage, the climb performance was much better, the dive characteristics were adapted to the requirements, the on-board weapons were more effective and the navigation and radio equipment had been improved. In addition, a three-axis control system had been installed, which unfortunately we were not yet

allowed to use All in all, the Me-210 was a sleek bird in which we placed all our hopes and therefore looked forward to the first takeoff with joy. The aircraft type was withdrawn. We were not allowed to keep it and had to re-equip and go into the 1942 summer offensive in Russia with old Me-110s. A deep disappointment took hold."

**"German jet fighters over Stalingrad: could the Allied air forces have been old hat by 1942?"**

"Many hounds are the death of rabbits!" Whether over the ruins of Stalingrad or the Libyan desert, it became increasingly clear in 1942 that Germany's Luftwaffe was barely able to counterbalance the tremendous numerical superiority of the Allies. What was missing at that time was a completely new, superior aircraft.

There would have been no need for enemy superiority, because this German wonder bird actually existed.

Many people are of the opinion that the Messerschmitt Me-262 of the ' had been the world's first jet fighter. It arrived at the front in 1944. In reality, however, the Heinkel He-280 was the world's first jet fighter and, even more amazingly, it was already flying at the time of the Blitzkrieg.

The Heinkel He-280 can lay claim to three world records [body\\_heinkel\\_he.280.html](#): It was the first jet fighter, the first jet with two nozzles, and the first jet aircraft that was anything other than a pure research aircraft J-4

In fact, the maiden flight of the Heinkel He-280 took place as early as September 1940, when it was tested on the 11th of that month still unpowered in tow behind a Heinkel He-111. Fritz SCHÄFER was the first person to fly it under its own power with its two Heinkel HeS8A centrifugal jet engines on April 2, 1941. The way seemed clear for a revolution in air warfare!

The Heinkel He-280 was based on a design by Dipl. Ing. Robert LUSSEr, who joined HEINKEL as technical director on July 1, 1939. LUSSEr WAS well aware of the Messerschmitt Me.P.65 project (which gave rise to the later Me-262) and wanted to pre-empt it with a new HEIN- KEL aircraft. Under utmost secrecy, he began the initial project work for a twin-engine fighter. Only a short time later, two designs were built as mockups under the designation >He-180<. Agreement was reached on the second design, the He-180, with a forward-mounted pilot's seat. The preliminary work was completed by August 10, 1939. Development of the planned Heinkel HeS8A jet engine was scheduled to take 14 months. As early as April 1940, the first HeS8A was successfully put on the test stand on schedule

But the new, revolutionary jet fighter had enemies in its own ranks! October 20, 1939, there is a memo about a meeting of Heinkel Director LUSSEr with General UDET, in which LUSSEr complained that the "small referees of the RLM" were making difficulties for Heinkel to continue its work. Since General UDET WAS very interested in who might make such

difficulties, Director LUSSEK gave detailed information about this. UDET - replied that he had given his consent to the work and that he . "fanatically believe in the success of the work at Heinkel". He wanted to have the "delaying" RLM officers instructed accordingly. Unfortunately, the gentlemen were not named.

The airframe of the He-280 had been designed without risk. Its setup mass of 3215 kg was much lower than that of the later Me-262 at 3800 kg. It was the first aircraft in the world to have an ejection seat.

He-280 airframe production was proceeding rapidly at Heinkel, and a secret Heinkel document dated October 22, 1940, made it clear that the Heinkel He-280 airframe could be built extraordinarily quickly. therefore informed the RLM that it intended to interrupt airframe production of the He-280 until endurance runs of the HeS8 engines were completed and the schedule for production all the engines could be clearly overlooked<sup>1-4</sup>

On April 5, 1941, pilot Paul BADER took off for a demonstration flight in front of Ernst UDET and the top officials of the Reich Aviation Ministry. His demonstration flight left a good impression on all those present.

Then, on July 11, 1941, Colonel General UDET put on the pressure. He inquired the status of the He-280 at the Heinkel company: "The question of the >Interceptor< was extremely urgent During the first flight

the He-280, which was impressive, ^m the engine had been described as clear He would like to know, in all sincerity, when a front-line mission is to be expected. He had the impression that we (Heinkel, author's note) were already significantly safer in May. situation at the moment was such that could only pursue a development war all, we would have a significant staff of high-quality people working on this task, who could be better assigned to other tasks if it became apparent that they would not be able to finish the engines in time Colonel General UDET expects us to submit a report as soon as possible, stating, after a thorough examination of the situation, when a frontline operation can be expected. The most important thing would be to find out all the remaining difficulties that might jeopardize readiness for series production. Several promising solutions would then have to be tested on the broadest possible front in parallel test bench runs. This would be the only way to reach the goal."

Here it becomes apparent that UDET was very interested in the development of the He-280 and already put strong pressure on HEINKEL because of conspicuous delays, up to hidden threats.

It is therefore completely false that UDET, as is repeatedly claimed, saw no need for an airplane without a propeller in April 1941, no matter what the future would bring. Rather, UDET rushed up to HEINKEL and said ^m after the first flight of the He-280: "I would like to thank you for what has been accomplished here What has happened here today is perhaps the proudest day the Heinkel company has experienced to date. If we only had a few

make such machines appear on the Channel in such a way that the British can accurately determine the flight characteristics, the whole aircraft program must go haywire over there" Again, UDET was promised to deliver operational jet fighters by March 1942. ' This would have been just in time for the major German offensive in the southern part of the Eastern Front, targeting the Caucasus and Stalingrad.

UDET decided that the RLM would take over the further financing of

HEINKEL'S development work and that he should be assigned material and skilled workers. In fact, however, they were never to be sufficient. Here, however, not only the forces that had already hindered development in 1939 appeared

On April 9, 1941, HEINKEL had been allowed to take over the Hirth-Flugmotorenwerke in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen and its branch plant in Berlin in order to use them for its jet engine development. The engine development group under POPE VON OHAIN initially remained at the Heinkel plant in Marienehe which appeared to be close to series production.

He-58, which was already ready for production. The second development group moved to Zuffenhausen to complete the He-530. - OHAIN itself was to follow later. In order to settle disputes between the plant management in Zuffenhausen and OHAIN from the outset, HEINKEL sent Director WOLFF to take charge of the overall management. - He had come to Heinkel in Marienehe from BMW and been appointed technical director for engine development. HEINKEL realized too late that WOLFF did not bring with him the desired prerequisites for smooth management of the planned plant but rather developed the fight against the employees in Zuffenhausen. According to HEINKEL'S own words, WOLFF made specialists disappear in the general factory who had been transferred to Zuffenhausen specifically for the engine work!

Throughout the following year, progress was slow due to continued engine problems. A second jet engine, the HeS30, was considered a more powerful alternative to the HeS8. It would have given the He-280 a further performance boost, and it came on the test stand in 1941. The design did not come from POPE VON OHAIN, but from Dipl. Ing. Max Adolf MÜLLER. It built on preliminary work that had begun at Junkers under the technical direction of Prof. WAGNER.

But the engines for the He-280 just wouldn't finish!

Work on the HeS8 and HeS30 was then halted by the RLM in July 1942. HEINKEL was forced to direct all its efforts to the future HeS011 engine, a much more advanced but thus also more problematic design.

Shortly before, disputes and intrigues had forced the head of the HeS30 development, Max Adolf MÜLLER, to leave Heinkel. MÜLLER'S remaining group nevertheless succeeded in achieving good test bed results with the HeS30 in October 1942. In December 1942, however, the RLM demanded a halt to attempts to prove the HeS30's serviceability<sup>1</sup>

a comparison flight on December 17, 1942, Heinkel demonstrated the superiority of the jet engine conventionally powered aircraft. The Heinkel He-280 V-3 took part in an aerial

demonstration against an FW-190 over Marienehe. During the demonstration, the pilot of the FW-190 repeatedly tried to get behind the He-280, but the jet fighter pilot was able to prevent this by flying fast in large diameter circles around the FW-190. This repeatedly gave the FW-190 the opportunity to move directly toward it at high speed, get into firing position, and chase past it without the German Luftwaffe's best piston engine fighter being able to follow the jet.

On December 17, 1942, the same airplane ventured on a cross-country flight to Rechlin, where it was flown by pilot Fritz SchÄFER to an RLM delegation under Generaloberst MILCH. The flight time from Marienehe to Rechlin was 12 minutes at 4000 m altitude.

The demonstration of the aircraft in Rechlin and the result of the airshow immediately led to the lifting of the provisional construction ban on V-type He-280. Although the HeS8 engine was still far from being ready for series production at this point, the RLM now wanted to order 300 He-280 aircraft. In January 1943, HEINKEL therefore entered into negotiations with Siebel for a license to build the aircraft, since its main plant no longer had any production capacity available. However, since Siebel also had neither sufficient manpower nor the necessary machine tools to accept such an order, the most modern aircraft of the German Luftwaffe was finally to be built occupied foreign!

Although attempts were made as a last resort to equip the He-280 with Junkers Jumo 004 or BMW 003 jet engines after the Heinkel jet engines failed, the entire He-280 project was abandoned on March 27, 1943, because the Jumo 004-powered Me-262 had most of the qualities of the He-280 but was better suited for these engines. HEINKEL was ordered to abandon the He-280 and turn all his attention to bomber development.

All in all, it remains to solve the mystery of why the Heinkel He-280 failed. Its airframe was already ready in 1940. It had already flown under self-propulsion in 1941, but never made much progress. It is quite clear that General UDET DID not suppress the He-280, as was often claimed in the postwar period but rather supported it with all his might until he realized that HEINKEL WAS not getting anywhere. The He-280 failed because of the engine issue. Development of its intended HeS8 engine basically got nowhere from the time the prototype He-280 took off for the first time on April 2, 1941, the beginning of 1941, just 500 kg of the envisaged 700 kg thrust had been achieved, and by the beginning of 1942, just 550 kg. had managed. An attempt to improve the design by adding a single axial compressor stage behind the centrifugal compressor began from the V-16 model onward. A total of 30 HeS8s were produced, and by the end HEINKEL had achieved 600 kg of thrust.<sup>1-2</sup>

A similar fate befell the large Heinkel HeS30 engine, which was to serve as the final engine for later versions of the jet fighter.

The Reichsluftfahrtministerium had seriously hoped to be able to put the He-280 into service before the end of 1941 if HEINKEL succeeded in making ten HeS8 engines serviceable by the end of October 1941. Everything depended on the engine. It was precisely here that omissions

and lack of coordination hindered the necessary maturation. Fundamental questions and doubts arose.

For example, testing of an Adler gearbox for the HeS8 on the HeS6 test carrier alone was delayed by about a month due to slow production of the intermediate piece.

The originally planned air testing of the HeS8, which had already been completed as a prototype in April 1940, was abandoned on December 1, 1940 (!) The Heinkel He-111F (W. No. 2390), which had already been made available, was released to Rechlin as a courier aircraft.

As a flimsy justification, POPE VON OHAIN and his team argued that the ground tests should be intensified instead. The construction of the absolutely necessary ground test stands was nevertheless obstructed and delayed. At the time, however, only flight tests could have determined the thrust dependence of the new engines on flight altitude, their control behavior under various acceleration conditions and many other factors.

Due to these strange circumstances, the first He-280 prototypes had to take off with engines that were still completely untested in the air

fall of 1941, the RLM had therefore asked Heinkel to finally use He-111F flight test carriers to accelerate the tests. But they had long since been given

It was not until September 1942 that an He-111 H-3 was converted into a flying test bed for the HeS8 trials. Eighteen months of testing were lost.

The HeS30 engine was running in October 1942 with a continuous thrust of 500 kg and a takeoff power of 750 kg.<sup>1-3</sup>

Its specific data, such as fuel consumption and thrust performance compared to frontal area and net mass, were not equaled again by all subsequent developments, even abroad, until 1947. Test runs after 1945 with the Americans resulted in as much as 910 kg of thrust.

Despite this, further development of the HeS30 was abruptly abandoned after the first test runs on the instructions of the RLM in agreement with Heinkel employee WOLFF and shut down by withdrawing the designers involved to other tasks. Instead of completing the promising development of the HeS30 by all means, HEINKEL was instructed by Helmut SCHELP, head of engine development at the RLM, to develop more powerful engines with 1300 kg thrust, such as the HeS011 (Class II) was no need for another Class I. An irony, since the competing Class I engines from Jumo and BMW were not completed in another two years.

The Reichsluftfahrtministerium had already turned its attention to the HeS011 engine in early 1942. Development of this next-generation engine was also underway at the ÜHAIN Group. The first HeS011->Zukunftstriebwerk< was promised by June 1942. Now delays of all kinds already known from the HeS8 occurred again. Although the first full-scale HeS011 ran in September 1943, only a handful were completed by the end of the war.

An HeS011 engine was flight-tested under the fuselage of a Ju-88 in 1945. However, this test vehicle was shot down after about four hours of testing. The Allied fighters seemed to have been waiting for the aircraft. A second Ju-88 prepared for this purpose was also destroyed during a bombing raid on Fürstenfeldbruck.<sup>1</sup> Here, too, the enemy seems to have been well informed.

Immediately after the end of the war, however, VON OHAIN'S group built - about 10 more HeS011s for the U.S. Navy and England using existing parts.

As if by magic, the Americans' earlier Heinkel engines of 1940/42, HeS8 and HeS30, suddenly worked superbly alongside the HeS011. They also performed better on the test stand than during the Third Reich. Here, fundamental questions arise once again.

Newly discovered documents prove that everything went right: the failure of the world's first jet fighter. We owe this tremendous insight to a document in the special collection of the Deutsches Museum in Munich.

The document under the designation >FAA 001/0323< brings breathtaking things to light. It deals with a hearing of witnesses on November 25, 1944, before a senior field judge of the Luftwaffe.<sup>2</sup> The 28-year-old Werner HILGENDORF was - questioned at that time, he had been a grenadier in a tank destroyer training company in Gnesen a month previously. HILGENDORF had worked as an engineer for HEINKEL in Rostock since July 1939, including several years in POPE VON OHAIN'S office.

The interrogation took place as a preliminary investigation to an official court-martial and was located with the chief of the Air Force Legal Department. The military superior of the newly called-up grenadier had set it in motion after the engineer had given HILGENDORF hints about certain difficulties in the field of turbo development. In the following six pages, HILGENDORF gives precise details of VON OHAIN'S and WOLFF'S role in the failed jet engine development at HEINKEL.

He described how VON OHAIN and WOLFF placed obstacles in the way of MÜLLER'S group's project until HEINKEL suggested MÜLLER RESIGN IN 1942. After MÜLLER'S departure, HILGENDORF himself had made efforts to improve VON OHAIN'S steel engine, mostly by drawing on findings from MÜLLER'S project, but had been hindered by WOLFF until he left von Ohain's office at his own request. According to the document, one of the most important successes of WOLFF'S and VON OHAIN'S saboteurs was that MÜLLER'S HeS30 turbine could no longer be completed.

According to HILGENDORF'S testimony before the interrogating judge, it was clear that WOLFF, as the person responsible for production, also working methodically against the wartime use of jet engines and was in agreement with



VON ÜHAIN in this. VON ÜHAIN wanted to create scope for his basic research, but had no intention of making the results usable in the war.

WOLFF and VON ÜHAIN, however, apparently proceeded so skillfully that not enough evidence emerged. HEINKEL himself had been deprived of influence over his own plant in Zuffenhausen by an intrigue of WOLFF since February 1943. WOLFF was assigned as the Kommissarischer Leiter! From 1944 onwards, it was not difficult for WOLFF and the others involved, such as VON ÜHAIN, to refer to the circumstances of the war, despite the growing anger of HEINKEL, when the continuing delays in the completion of the turbines had to be justified.

To cover himself, WOLFF also collected material against HEINKEL. According to information provided by MÜLLER in the post-war period, WOLFF even tried to persuade MÜLLER to take joint action against HEINKEL.

HILGENDORF also mentions a remark by WOLFF that HEINKEL should be careful about passing on incriminating material, since it could earn him a court martial himself. After all, HEINKEL would have had to justify why he suggested MÜLLER - resign! Let the RLM in on the conflicts between the two development teams at HEINKEL. In the end, it was this knowledge that each of the parties involved possessed sufficient material about the other that delayed the escalation - until HILGENDORF gave his testimony.

HEINKEL now had to answer HILGENDORF's accusations against WOLFF and VON ÜHAIN before the Luftwaffe Oberfeldrichter Dr. SCHLEICH. However, he did so in a rather waxy manner by February 1945 that he could not judge happen in detail

Even in the post-war period, HEINKEL then avoided accusing the two of being saboteurs, preferring to WOLFF and VON ÜHAIN appear as failures. He also concealed the actual story of the development of his jet engines in his autobiography *Stürmisches Leben*.<sup>19</sup>

It would be interesting to find out who arranged for Ing. HILGENDORF to be drafted into the Panzerjägern. It was quite unusual that an engineer who had knowledge about one of the most important armament projects of the Third Reich was released. The Wehrmacht was an inconvenient witness to be removed from the way? HILGENDORF also blamed this on WOLFF.

HILGENDORF's charges were so serious that they would have been sufficient to sentence WOLFF and VON ÜHAIN to death. Fortunately for the two engine researchers, HILGENDORF, who had been drafted into the tank destroyers, quickly fell on the eastern front. Gniezno was at the center of the Soviet offensive in Poland that broke out in January 1945. The engineer died in a military hospital in Landsberg an der Warthe on January 22, 1945. A troublesome witness was eliminated.

Hans Joachim PABST VON ÜHAIN, who was facing a court martial in 1945 for

sabotaging German turbo developments, went to the USA in 1947 as part of >Operation Paperclip<. He worked there very successfully until his retirement as chief scientist of the propulsion laboratory of the US Air Force. He died in 1998 in his adopted home sunny Florida

It is also unclear to what extent Admiral CANARIS HAD ALSO HAD A hand in preventing the He-280 jet fighters. In the spring of 1941, Ernst HEINKEL reported a meeting with the Abwehr chief at the Cafe Horcher in Berlin. CANARIS wanted to find out whether HEINKEL could be counted on in the event of a coup. CANARIS, whom HEINKEL saw for the first time at that time, reportedly did not know what conclusions he came to on the basis of his statements.<sup>2</sup>

However, we know from the example of the German atomic bomb development the defense could successfully hinder the completion of revolutionary technologies of the Third Reich<sup>3</sup>

Without going into the question of sabotage of in-house engine development, HEINKEL complained in the postwar period that it remained puzzling to him why the completed He-280 was suddenly cancelled in favor of the only half-finished Me-262 by the RLM. No one could blame him for doubts validity of technical justification for the decommissioning of the He-280

The Russians did indeed come across the He-280 jet fighters! However, this did not happen over Stalingrad, but only in 1945. Soviet loot commissions found three Heinkel He- 280s in non-airworthy condition at the Heinkel factory in Vienna, as well as some He58 engines. Russian evaluation documents prove a thorough investigation of these new technologies See: Volker Koos, *Hein- kel-Raketen- und Strahlflugzeuge*, Aviatik, Oberhaching 2008, pp. 158 u. 162 f.

However, HEINKEL has left the world of facts here:

Despite all the unbelievable delays, Field Marshal MILCH, succeeding General UOET, and General GALLAND gave the He-280 another chance in December 1942! With the urgency level SS the jet fighter came into the RLM->Vulkan< program. With Junkers or BMW jet engines, 300 He-280s were to be built in series at Siebel-Flugzeugwerke. But as early as February 1943, General Engineer HERTEL OF THE RLM's procurement office rejected these plans, since the Siebel factories were (allegedly) working at full capacity with the Ju-88 construction program. However, Siebel-Werke had already signaled HEINKEL's approval and was prepared to start work on series production of the He-280 in April 1943.

In the meantime, two unexplained crashes of the two test models of world's first jet fighters had occurred, setting the He-280 program back again. The incidents were investigated by the >Sonderstab 330<. The >Sonderstab 330< was one of the strangest creations of the Germans in World War II. Composed of specialists from the intelligence corps, Abwehr, Reich Security Main Office, and Kripo, 330 was concerned with detecting espionage, treason, and sabotage for the benefit of the enemy!

Then, on March 27, 1943, MILCH TOLD A GL development meeting that the Heinkel He-280 was to be cancelled in favor of the Messerschmitt Me-262. HEINKEL, worn down by years of delays, had himself >thrown in the towel< "to free up his designers for more important work, especially the He-177"

It seems difficult to understand why Ernst HEINKEL DID not want to remember the true end of his He-280 in his memoirs. Was he, who intended to play an important role again in the German postwar aircraft industry, afraid of something? The words >treason< or >sabotage< do not appear once in the thick book!

Crucially, the He-280 was already partially developed in 1940 and was only waiting for its HeS8 engines to be perfected. With proper support and without engine sabotage it could have entered production in late 1941. It would have finally secured air superiority for the Luftwaffe and filled the gap between the FW-190 (1941) and the Me-262 (1944). All likelihood the remaining problems with the HeS8 could have been ironed out once production of the fighter got underway would have come. The He-280 would still have reached the fighter squadrons at the end of the blitzkrieg phase.

The impact of the entry into service of this superior jet fighter on the German Luftwaffe from early 1942 would have been unimaginable.

At a time when the Third Reich was still at the height of its power, the He-280s, with a speed of 817 km/h, had no enemy to fear. Complemented

by the Focke-Wulff FW-190 and the Messerschmitt BF-109G, Germany's planes over England, North Africa and also on the Eastern Front would have driven the enemy air forces out of the skies and made all the Allies' air armament programs old hat.

Without the Allies, who had no knowledge of the existence of the He-280 until May 1942, realizing the danger they were in, only eight prototypes of this elegant-looking aircraft made it to the air

If things had gone well and properly with the He-280, as planned, a single squadron of these planes could have kept the skies open over Stalingrad for the lumbering German transport planes

Another good example of the >luck< that certainly played a large part in the subsequent Allied victory over Germany.

### **How Cöring (almost) saw the light in 1942: The abuses in the Luftwaffe are to be investigated by a court martial**

The German air force, together with the Panzerwaffe, was the backbone of the >Blitzkrieg concept< in 1939/ 1940.

In the summer and autumn of 1941, two-thirds of the Luftwaffe was fighting in the skies of Russia.

Nevertheless, there were clear signs of weakening soon after the start of Operation Barbarossa<. The reorganization of the Luftwaffe command organization, which had become necessary with the beginning of the multi-front war in view of the expansion of the eastern theater of war, was not carried out. intelligence also failed flagrantly. The forces of the German air force then also proved to be far overtaxed by the multi-front war.

In November 1941, the Luftwaffe's development and production crisis led to General UDET'S death. But was it only due to a lack of foresight on the part of the Führer? The neglect of new aircraft types

led to failures. Especially on the eastern front, the new Me 210 destroyers and the long-range bomber He 177 had already been firmly expected. Other serious failures concerned the Arado Ar 240 reconnaissance plane, the Focke Wulff Fw 187 >Falke< heavy fighter and the Heinkel He 280 jet fighter. The incredible case of the first jet fighter in the world will occupy us elsewhere.

Thus, the old aircraft types, which were supposed to be phased out already, had to be improved and built on again and again. While proven mainstays such as the He 111 and Ju 87 >Stuka< and Bf 110 could be used less and less by day in the East from 1942 onward, despite all the improvements, basic models such as the Bf 109 and Ju 88 proved so capable of development that they were able to hold their own against enemy models until the end of the war. Nevertheless, the initial superiority of German aviation technology in 1939/1940 was senselessly squandered in 1941/42.

It was not until 1944/1945, with the introduction of jet and rocket aircraft, that the German Air Force achieved large-scale technological modernization. By this time, however, it was long too late for a turnaround.

The development and production crisis had so weakened the German

Program design and the Air Force's drop in performance vs. air force at the time of >Barbarossa< that in early March 1942 GÖRNING ordered a court-martial investigation of the UOET's three employees PLOCH, TSCHERSICH and REIDENBACH. The Reichsmarschall was prompted by UOET's successor, Erhardt MILCH, WHO FOUND glaring deficiencies after taking over UOET's business area. 1-2

Thus began months of court martial interrogations in which GÖRING as a person was included as well as numerous leading employees down to simple engineers of the Technical Office.

The four high judges did a thorough job. After months of interrogation, they were able to report to GÖRING at Obersalzberg in the fall of 1942. The judges urgently asked to refrain from opening a trial. Otherwise, too many abuses would be uncovered.

GÖRING DID not seize the opportunity that presented itself and failed to make a decision on where incompetence, disinterest and corruption were to be found in the incredible abuses in the Reich Aviation Ministry and parts of the German aviation industry in first years of the war, or where treason and acts of sabotage had already left their bloody mark.

Instead of thoroughly cleaning out the Augean stables of the Luftwaffe leadership, the blame was placed on the late UDET. GÖRING is reported to have said: "I am glad that UDET has judged himself. That way he spared me from having to take action against him."

So nothing happened against the root of the grievances. The protocols of the so-called "Ernst UDET" court-martial file cannot be found today. Either they were destroyed together with the numerous Luftwaffe files at the end of the war, or they are still hidden as secret material in Allied archives.

### **Is there evidence of treason and sabotage among the higher Luftwaffe leadership in the crucial month of December 1942?**

At the height of the crisis over Stalingrad, Field Marshal VON RCHTHOFEN recorded incredible sentences in his diary in December 1942:<sup>1</sup> "No one can be reached, which I try to do; otherwise I have not - telephoned JESCHONNEK since **16 Dec**, since all suggestions made are quietly rejected or, after verbal agreement, ordered otherwise. In addition, I now have definitive proof that certain things I have said have been carried forward in reverse. I now only send telexes, today a four-page one about the situation; in this I ask for orders for combat leadership, since nothing has been ordered lately, only grumbling."

Here, some things do not look like incompetence and negligence, but point to deliberate, sabotaging misconduct.

#### **14. Chapter**

### **Missed chances for a in separate peace with the Soviet Union 1941-42?**

**The Western Allies did not want a negotiated peace with  
Germany, but its unconditional surrender  
The Russian side saw this much more pragmatically.**



**Why nothing came of it is one of the great  
tragedies for the Russian and German people**

## **Was a separate peace in the East prevented in September 1941?**

On June 26, 1941, STAUN found himself in great distress. He instructed his intelligence chief BERIYA TO MOVE THE ROMANOV'S crown jewels, along with the diamond treasure and the Soviet state's gold and platinum reserves, in secure convoys toward the Urals. The famous Hermitage and other museums in the country were ordered to hand over all artifacts containing precious metals and jewels to BERIYA's representatives. More importantly, at the same time STAUN ordered BERIYA to deliver a secret message to Germany. He wanted peace, almost at any price. To this end, the Russian leader was prepared to hand over the Baltic states and Ukraine, as well as to return to their countries of origin the parts of Romania and Finland that had been occupied since 1940.<sup>1</sup>

It was decided that this generous offer should be forwarded through the Bulgarian Ambassador in Moscow, Ivan STAMENOV. It was known that STAMENOV was close to the German Abwehr of Admiral CANARIS. STAMENOV had also agreed to cooperate with the Russian secret service as early as 1934, when he was still a junior diplomat in Rome. The Bulgarian ambassador in Moscow was looked after by a senior officer named Pavel A. SuoOPLATOV.

latter had already proved past as a trustworthy and at the same time brutal liquidator in the service of the Russian secret service. He met STAMENOV in a Moscow restaurant called >Aragvi<. The Georgian restaurant was known at that time as the animation site of many shady deals. But to SuoOPLATOV's great disappointment, the operation failed. Bulgarian Ambassador STAMENOV DID not show any interest in passing the message to the Germans. On the contrary, he expressed his conviction that Germany would be defeated by Russia, if not in White Russia, then on the Volga. STAMENOV was an experienced "double-dealer" and clearly had his own objective, according to which Bulgaria's sovereignty should be preserved. Therefore, he probably had an interest in the German-Soviet war being protracted. The hope was probably that the adversaries would exhaust each other in the process and thus both would keep their hands off Bulgaria.

It remains unclear to this day whether STAMENOV ever passed on BERIYA's message to the Abwehr, and if so, in what form. One did not contradict BERIYA WITH impunity!

The situation for the Russians continued to worsen until the summer of 1941. In addition to the heaviest losses in materiel, men, and territory, by September 1941 there seemed to be nothing left to stop the Germans from

making a final victorious push on Moscow.

When no German response to the SuooPLATQv mission became apparent, the Russian side tried it through Sweden. The headquarters of the German defense was thus able to pick up moods and inane clearer indications that in the USSR, both at the diplomatic level and in the party leadership, there were people who would not refuse to >get along with the Germans again. These included, as we know today, above all the Foreign Minister W. Mow- Tow. 1-  
2

Also, the V-man Edgar CLAUSS, sitting in the Abwehrstelle Stockholm, reported certain signs of dissolution in the Soviet area. As a Jew who had converted to Protestantism, CLAUSS was at the same time an agent for Admiral CANARIS and the Russians. In addition, he conducted fraudulent business with Germans (from the Soviet Union) and Jews (from the Reich) willing to emigrate.

This man, who could only be protected from arrest by the Gestapo on charges of multiple fraud by Admiral CANARIS, also claimed later, in 1944, to the American intelligence service OSS that he had also been in close contact for years with the generals conspiring against HITLER IN ORDER to facilitate their own peace feelers.

CLAUSS claimed to be more closely acquainted with the Soviet ambassador to Sweden at the time, Alexandra KOLLQNTAJ, and told his commanding officer at the Abwehr in 1941 that Mrs. KOLLQNTAJ also wanted to defect to Germany.

Admiral CANARIS orally reported to the Foreign Office that he had been informed by his defense staff that the Russian ambassador in Stockholm, Mrs. KOLLQNTAJ, INTENDED TO break away from the Soviet government and go to Germany if she was offered the necessary securities. She wanted to buy a house in Germany. HITLER therefore ordered that Mrs. KOLLQNTAJ BE - accommodated in every way and with very great honor: "tax exemption, absolute security."

Probably this message was invented by CLAUSS, because Mrs. KOLLQNTAJ did not come.

What CANARIS DID not tell HITLER, however, were the Russian ge

attempts to conclude a special peace between the Reich and the Soviet Union. It is now considered certain that these activities began in September **1941** soon after the KoLLONTAJ duck. The problem with this was that lies by CLAUSS - about invented Russian peace wishes and truth were mixed. The German Abwehr agencies, however, inner found real Soviet hints and hidden offers to come to peace. But Admiral CANARIS DID not act on them. It would have been up to him to seize this opportunity and come before HmER with it - just as he had done with the KoLLONTAJ duck. But the chief of the German defense did not take this step.

The Soviets had no illusions about CANARIS. They saw him as a deadly adversary. A Soviet dossier on the admiral stated that CANARIS was the most dangerous intelligence agent in the world and capable of manipulating international industrial and capital interests.

In this process, it is once again clear that CANARIS ACTED like a guardian of the interests of the British. A possible peace agreement in the fall of **1941** between Russia and Germany was not in the interests of the United Kingdom. At that time, the USA had not even entered the war, so that in the event of a separate peace, England would again have faced a strengthened Third Reich alone.

The head of the Central Office Eastern Europe in the Reich Foreign Ministry, Peter Kleist, played an important role in the negotiations for a separate peace in Stockholm.

We recall here the words of Admiral CANARIS to his staff in September **1939**. At that time, when England and France had not yet declared war on Germany, but the invasion of Poland had already begun, CANARIS expressed himself as saying that if defeat for Germany would be a great misfortune, a German victory would be a much greater disaster.

How much suffering would the world have been spared if the Admiral had - not behaved like an ally or agent of the British in the fall of **1941**?

The former Russian party leader Nikita KHURCHTSOV said that the Russians had never received an official answer to their peace offer of **1941**.

### **The missing messenger of peace**

When on **18 J<sup>ü</sup> 1942** the regimental zampolit (commissar) Josef KERNESS, who had defected to the Germans at Kharkov, was interrogated and skimmed by the conspiratorial >club members< around GEHLEN, PETERSEN, VON DER ROENNE and VON ETZDORF, an eternal opportunity arose for both German and Russian policy. It was squandered by the conspirators.<sup>1-4</sup>

In the OKH (High Command of the Army) and its lc-Department >Foreign Armies East<, which at that time was still headed by Colonel, later Major General GEH-EN, there already existed at that time a resistance and conspirator group, which internally was called >Klub<. The >Klub< also included the senior

embassy counselor in Moscow, Gustav HILGER, whom we have already met in connection with the betrayal of the German attack date to the Soviets in May 1941. HILGER was attached exclusively to General GEHLEN himself, in addition to the General of the Russian and non-Russian volunteer units (Ostruppen), KÖSTRING, Captain STRICK-STRICKFELD. GEHLEN, as a defense and reconnaissance officer could not possibly have been unaware of the conspiratorial activities of his subordinates. His later appointment after the end of the war as head of the Federal Intelligence Service (BND) and the benevolent treatment American occupying powers also testified to this.

KERNESS, like other prominent Russian prisoners, was taken to a special prison camp run by Captain (later Major) PETERSEN. His immediate superior was Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg. OKW and the Führer's headquarters were unaware of the existence of this prominent prison camp.

Josef KERNESS, born in 1910 in Kirovograd, was an employee of the Supreme Political Command of the Red Army in Moscow until 1941. Personnel losses of the Russians in the first year of the war will have contributed to sending him to the front as a commissar of large troop units.

Unlike other prominent captured Russian officers, KERNESS came to OKH on behalf of an anti-Stalinist Soviet opposition. KERNESS explained that he defected because he had received orders from Russian opposition elements to explore the possibility of concluding a separate peace on the German side. Asked who the persons concerned were, KERNESS mentioned a few meaningless names, but asserted that numerous well-known personalities, as well as influential members of the Soviet Government, disagreed with Stalin's policy and were prepared to overthrow STALIN and enter into negotiations with the German Government on condition that Germany agreed to conclude a separate peace with Russia on acceptable terms. Asked about these personalities, KERNESS mentioned names such as MOLOTOV, KALININ, POTYOMKIN, SHAPOSHNIKOV, TIMOSHENKO and others. KERNESS wanted to have everything in detail written down and handed over to the military authorities in Kharkov. According to HILGER, - these documents were searched for by the responsible officer in the OKH (Army High Command). A letter from KERNESS to the Reich Foreign Minister was attached.

KERNESS was to deliver two letters of state to the German Reich government, one letter to the Führer and Reich Chancellor Adolf HITLER and the second letter to the Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joachim VON RIBBENTROP.

Embassy Counselor HILGER kept another record of the contents of his interrogation of the three Soviet officers VLASOV, SOJERSKY, and KERNESS,

dated August 8, 1942.

Since HILGER wrote that the state letters had disappeared and that a search was on for them, the first urgent initial suspicion arose criminally. In fact, in a document of August 10, 1942 from HILGER, addressed to the co-conspirator and henchman of Erich KORDT in Geneva, Hasso VON ETZDORF, IT WAS FOUND THAT the two letters of state for the overthrow of STALIN and the achievement of a special peace in the East between the USSR and the German Reich had not disappeared at all: They were there, and no less a person than VON STAUFFENBERG'S subordinate, Captain PETERSEN, had appropriated the letters. But they were never forwarded to the Reich government which they were intended. An unbelievable process!

HILGER instead told the peace messenger KERNES, "The timing of the end of the war is not dependent on the wishes of any Russian opposition, but will be determined by the German guns."

KERNES, who had defected only to initiate a separate peace between Germany and Russia, disappeared from the scene afterwards. He came in good faith with his peace mission to end the losing war on Russian soil now, to keep millions of people - Russians, non-Russians and Germans - alive and to save cities, villages and manufacturing towns from destruction. His fate, as well as that of his state letters, has remained unexplained to this day, - regardless of further investigation. It is much to suggest that the >dangerous< peacemaker disposed of in cold blood what business was it of a simple German captain and camp leader PETERSEN TO RECEIVE letters addressed to the Reich government?

An alleged crime and act of treason, coupled with document suppression to the point of murder and document disposal, seems obvious.

Another version was investigated by the Moscow researcher KHARITONOV WITH THE help of a well-known Moscow historian. According to this, the defector regimental commissar Josef KERNES fell into the hands of the Soviets after the end of the war. He was released after ten years of imprisonment in 1956, three years after STALIN'S death. If this was so, it can only mean that the incriminating documents and interrogation papers remained hidden from the Soviets.

In the 1990s, there were indications that the then Soviet leader GORBACHEV brought up the KERNES letters during his negotiations with the then German Chancellor KOHL. Did the Soviet Russian know their contents?

Whatever his fate was in any case, the courageous regimental commissar

KERNESS is hushed up today as much by the established professional historians as by the politicians.

In essence, his mission was similar to that of Rudolf HESS in 1941, when the peacetime aviator wanted to end World War II before the outbreak of fighting on the Eastern Front by flying to Scotland.

The reasons for concealing the KERNESS mission are obvious. It is a matter of preserving the established view of history. It would be extremely unpleasant for our established historians as well as for the politicians to have to admit truthfully that on the Eastern Front in 1942 there was the possibility of bringing about peace between the Greater German Reich and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

A separate peace through the KERNESS mission could have brought freedom and self-determination to the non-Russian peoples as well, and the Russian people the strength and freedom it urgently needed to manage and defend the great spatial depth of the Eurasian territory.

It was not to be! Therefore, the question could arise whether there was a firm intention of betrayal by German conspirators to maintain the Eastern Front in the interest of America and its intended invasion of Europe. This invasion was highly risky to the end and only had a chance of success. Germany and Russia remained wedged into each other. Even so, the invasion of Normandy in the summer of 1944 probably succeeded for the Western Allies only with significant support from senior German officers.<sup>1</sup>

study of the tragically ended CORE peace mission remains a challenge for the future. Time is ripe for this, when a new generation of historians will have replaced the present one. Second World War will be looked at in the same way as we look at the Napoleonic Wars today.

### **A crime of Canaris against peace: Did the admiral also prevent the end of the war in the East in 1942?**

In 1942, the Russians also showed further willingness to negotiate.<sup>2,3</sup> This occurred when the German summer offensive came to a halt and when the Soviets were on the threshold of victory at Stalingrad.

What could have been more natural than to hope that the German leadership would relent in this situation and be prepared to conclude a peace treaty? Thus the V-man and double agent CLAUS INFORMED Admiral CA- NAMS THAT the Soviets were ready for serious negotiations with Germany. The Soviets wanted to "seek a settlement with Germany in order to end this war, which was costly for both sides, as quickly as

possible.

Now the monstrous happened again: Admiral CANARIS DID not forward the concrete Russian peace feelers to HITLER!

A possible German-Russian peace treaty in **1942** would probably have saved the lives of many millions of people in the world. Flight and expulsion would have been spared above all to the German people!

The USA would probably never have become the dominant power in the world if Russia and Germany had reconciled in **1942**.



**15. Chapter**

**The hidden dagger in the back -  
or: What was behind Germany's  
>lost victory< 1941/42? -An  
attempt at a solution**



## **Was Moscow already informed about the German military opposition and the >Conspirators of July 20< winter of 1940/41?**

As early as February 22, 1941, the deputy of the Berlin Geheimdienst Residentur, Alexander KOROTKOV, reported to his headquarters in Moscow: "Carl GOERDELER, the former Reich Commissar for Price Control made an attempt to reach an agreement with the Wehrmacht leadership on the removal of HITLER and the formation of a new government. The talks were held at an exceedingly high level. On the whole, the representatives of the generalship opposed GOERDELER'S - proposals, although the head of the Wehrwirtschaftsstab of the Supreme Army Command, THOMAS and the commanding general of troops, HOEPNER, fully supported GOERDELER'S ideas. Now the High Command of the Wehrmacht shares HITLER'S ideas and approves his military plans. GOERDELER'S group adheres to its Anglo-American orientation." Unfortunately, the names of the other participants of "the exceedingly high level" of the Wehrmacht are unknown.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is certain that Moscow knew about the leading figures of the anti-HITLER opposition with the participation of high generals long before the beginning of the Eastern campaign and even before the actual German >defensive instances< such as Gestapo, SD and Forschungsamt (Luftwaffe).

The report itself is demonstrably authentic and astonishingly correct. However, it is disputed where the Soviet agent KOROTKOV got this information from.

The assertion that this was due to a collaboration of the >Rote Kapelle< with the conservative German anti-HITLER opposition confirmed

At that time, the Soviet secret service had not yet been able to infiltrate its own agents into the GOERDELER circle. Thus, the reporting about the above-described meeting of the oppositionists must have been leaked to the Soviets by traitors from the military environment. fact, until today unknown sources of the Soviet secret service INO existed in the German military apparatus.

It is interesting to note that General Georg THOMAS, who, according to KOROTKOV, wanted HITLER removed and a new government agreeable to the Anglo-Americans in early 1941, was at about the same time writing memoranda to HITLER promoting an eastern campaign in order to improve the allegedly disastrous raw material situation of the German

Reich - a misrepresentation, since German raw material supplies were amply replenished at the time as a result of the large spoils in France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Norway.

In this context, reference must also be made to the inadequate preparation of the German Army for the Eastern campaign, in which General THOMAS also played a part.

General Erich HOEPNER ATTRACTED attention in December 1941 by his controversial retreat from Moscow.

Of course, these can be only >coincidences<.

### **Russian postwar accusations: Did the >Black Chapel" want the Eastern campaign?**

Modern Russian authors such as Valentin FAUN ACCUSE the conservative German resistance (>"Black Chapel") of applying double standards in the transmission of secrets.<sup>1</sup>

In 1937 and 1938, for example, London and Washington regularly received detailed information about where the Germans were preparing operations with the intended use or threat of force. From the remilitarization of the Rhineland (1936) to the annexation of Austria (1938) to the attacks on Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France, the flow of information to the West showed no major gaps. The information had come directly from the upper echelons of the German military leadership and, in addition, from employees of the Foreign Office. According to Valentin FAUN, the purpose of these deliberate revelations was the highest secrets of the Reich to show Western powers Hitler's true intentions, his strong and weak sides, so that the actions could be averted or the Führer at least got a severe rebuff.

In comparison, the news flow to the West about Hitler's final plans to strike the Soviet Union was meager. John SOMERVILLE, for example, reported at a symposium in Stuttgart that British intelligence did not become aware of the code name >Barbarossa< until 8 May 1941. Nor would General Field Marshal VON BRAUN-CHITSCH, when he signed off on Goerdeler's peace plan transmitted to London, have said a word about the fact that just three weeks later the main act of World War II was to begin with the attack against the Soviet Union.

Where were OSTER and the other >Nazis- ser< from the apparatus of Admiral CANARIS, FAUN asked? Also, the documents known to the Russians clearly allow the conclusion that VON BRAUN, CHITSCH, HALDER, THOMAS and other high-ranking military officers, who had successfully delayed the elaboration of the operative plans against the Western powers, even tried to outdo their boss in drawing up the plans for the strike against the USSR. HALDER and his closest confidants would even have encouraged HITLER in his decision.

As we will see below, this was not done without reason.

The British finally deciphered the code of the German Reichsbahn in May 1941. Now they learned a lot about troop transfers and also about the provision of wagons for future prisoners of war.

On June 7, 1941 full text of the combat order to the Luftwaffe then fell into hands of the British interception and decryption service. On the basis of this material, Anthony EDEN - was able to conduct the well-known conversation with the Russian ambassador Ivan MAISKY - on June 10, 1941.

On June 12, 1941, the Western Allies decoded the telegram of the Japanese Ambassador OSHIMA, who radioed the contents of his conversation with HITLER to Tokyo. This telegram confirmed: the war was within reach. Immediately, the British sent another warning signal to STALIN.

Put in a larger context, however, it is certain that Soviet reconnaissance had obtained sufficient information about German plans down to the last detail even without the treacherous actions of high Western-friendly German opposition circles.

However, the Russian reproach remains that the same gentlemen, in contrast to the planned German actions in the West, did nothing to delay the outbreak of war in the East. Yes, the circle of the >Black Chapel< is even accused of having actively promoted this expansion of the war.

As late as the summer of 1940, Admiral CANAAN had prevented a possible successful German invasion of England after the fall of Dunkirk by deliberately exaggerating English strength figures, saving England at the weakest moment in its history.

In 1941 this was quite different! In a misguided deployment of limited German forces against an underestimated opponent, the same circle of people demonstrably expected a fiasco of >Unternehmens Barbarossa<. For Major General Henning VON TRESCKOW

even before the outbreak of the fighting, it was "as certain as the Amen in the church that the campaign against the Soviet Union would have to fail!"<sup>1</sup>

The complaints of modern Russian writers about the application of double standards to advance warnings by members of >Black Chapel< should not obscure the fact that later, after the outbreak of fighting, the greatest benefit could be derived from direct acts of treachery by the person<sup>^</sup> is so criticized. Also, as will be shown elsewhere, the Soviets could hardly complain about a lack of information from the Reich in the run-up to Barbarossa<.

## Were there pro-Russian conspirators?

Gestapo chief General Heinrich MÜLLER made surprising statements to the Americans in Switzerland in 1948.<sup>2</sup>

This includes the existence of a pro-Russian conspiratorial group in high positions on the German side. MÜLLER commented: "Well, as I said, many of the older officers with higher ranks sabotaged HITLER's plans. I must emphasize at this point that, although not a military specialist myself, I know that HITLER was right more often about military matters than these people. HITLER would issue a Führer order and because some general was offended by HITLER's person, that officer would not obey the order directly. If a disaster happened, the same man and his friends would then shift the responsibility to HITLER. And they would also lie directly to his face many times. This was never a good idea. It got so bad that HITLER had to have all his conferences recorded by stenographers. He simply could not trust his military specialists."

MÜLLER heard a senior Army officer once say, "This is HITLER's war, if we lose, it's his fault." "I must say," MÜLLER said, "that this was a strong thing to hear, in a great war that had to be fought against deadly enemies who only wanted to destroy the country of these officers. Many of these people were involved in the conspiracy, and many of them wanted to join forces with the Russians against the West. When I interrogated some of them, I was shocked to realize how little they knew of STALIN's criminal methods and that they obviously did not want to believe that once they got rid of HITLER, STALIN would not destroy them along with him. These pro-Russian conspirators were in the highest echelons of their power."

ze."

When asked for specific names, MÜLLER told the Americans that VON STAUFFENBERG himself was very pro-Russian, as was the cavalry general VON KÖSTRING, just to name a few. VON DER SCHULENBURG was ambassador to Moscow and KÖSTRING his military attaché. Then there was GISEVIUS, one of the Americans' good friends, who, as the Gestapo found out, was also a Soviet agent. In addition, there were other active groups in the Foreign Office. Even in the SS there were people who had supported a Russian solution. Especially they had been sitting in the "Germanic Project Office". In response to further questions, MÜLLER stated that he himself believed that SS General BERGER had connections with Communists, but that he had not been able to prove it. When he approached HITLER about this, the Reichsführer SS did not want to hear anything bad about BERGER and became so angry that MÜLLER had to temporarily stop his investigations against BERGER. MÜLLER, however, had been on Berger's heels until the end.

In this context, references to the Haus- und Amt office (cover name "Büro Haus") become

interesting. This Swiss office passed on important information from Germany to the Allies in the West and East during the war. We know today that HAUSAMANN much received the most secret news from the closest environment of the Reichsführer SS. Who this mole was is unknown until now. Did MÜLLER give a hint here?

Not surprisingly, MÜLLER also counted General of Artillery Nalther VON SEYDLITZ-KURZBACH among the pro-Russian conspirators. After his strange behavior during the Battle of Stalingrad, VON SEYDLITZ later joined the Russian-controlled >National Committee Free Germany< (NKFD). On August 22, 1944, in a publication of the NKFD, VON SEYDLITZ-KURZBACH referred to the "great teachings of a MARX, an ENGELS, a LENIN and a Stalin, the pioneers of a better humanity".

Because of his actions during the battle of Stalingrad, the question could be asked here, from when on VON SEYDLITZ worked these >helpers of humanity" to the detriment of his own comrades.

In Soviet hands, after the fall of Stalingrad, VON SEYDLITZ wrote letters to the commanders of the Wehrmacht urging them to stop fighting.<sup>1</sup> Twice, in October 1943 and February 1944, the general went to the front to be available - in vain - for talks with his (ex-)comrades fighting for the Third Reich. No one was willing to >change fronts<, as was often the case with Romanian, Hungarian or Italian generals. This shows that the >Pro-Russian Group< had no support among the German fighting troops.

In February 1944, VON SEYDLITZ demanded that the National Committee be recognized by the Allies as the German government-in-exile. STAUDEN put a short end to this spook. The troops called >Seydlitz soldiers< by the Third Reich were >reverted< German prisoners of war or exiled communists who fought against the Wehrmacht from 1944 on. We will deal with their role in the following volume. After the end of the war, VON SEYDLITZ was no longer needed.

In 1955, General VON SEYDLITZ arrived in the Federal Republic as a late returnee, despised by his former comrades. A year later, a death sentence was imposed on him for treason during the war by the Federal German judiciary.

### **The Eastern Campaign as an Opportunity for Germany's Longed-for Military Setback**

In 1939/40, the dilemma of the military resistance was that the German troops were rushing from victory to victory. How could one make it clear to the public that there was an urgent need for action after a change of leadership?

Henning VON TRECKOW, one of the leading military conspirators, noted, "There is no point in acting while people are still singing >Hosi-anna<."<sup>2,3</sup> TRECKOW saw Germany's victory over Poland, which had mobilized as early as March 1939, as a damper on the resistance, of which he was already a member. In his opinion, the German victories led to a fatal

misperception among the Germans. Only a military setback, TRESCKOW - hoped, could create more favorable conditions for a coup.

Immediately after the French campaign, Chief of Staff HALDER had talked for hours with VON TRESCKOW and others about the question of an assassination.

A few months later, however, HALDER VON TRESCKOW TEARFULLY asserted that he saw no possibilities for a coup d'état in the present circumstances.

Now new danger threatened, because with the victory over Russia HITLER would have gained a reservoir of power like England had with the USA. The threatening >Great Germanic Empire< filled VON TRESCKOW with horror and dismay. Such a shapelessly inflated entity mocked all his imaginings. It irrevocably destroyed Europe's world of states, according to his biographer SCHURIG. TRESCKOW, however, was not flippant enough to give HITLER any chance of victory over Russia. "If the Red Army were to be like the French in 1940," a "National Socialist empire" would be a fact and the intention to "overthrow HITLER WOULD be made infinitely more difficult." But was the pandemonium inevitable for the resistance?

Now, in 1941, VON TRESCKOW and his like-minded men were left with the chance that the preemptive strike against the Soviet Union would change the situation. TRESCKOW believed that now the "longed-for setback would come, as sure as the Amen in the church" end of the German defeat would become the hour of liberation.

Henning VON TRESCKOW then became the first general staff officer of the prestigious >Heeresgruppe Mitte< and was stationed in Belarus: an ideal position to surround himself with like-minded people. Thus, according to Roger MOORHOUSE, it was precisely the staff of >Heeresgruppe Mitte< that became a nest of intrigue and treachery. High posts in the headquarters of >Heeresgruppe Mitte< were thus more and more often occupied by like-minded military men. Those who did not want to participate were removed.

### **The master of >obfuscation tactics<**

During the decisive years of the Second World War, Colonel General Friedrich FROMM - belonged to the closest military leadership circle of the Third Reich. He was involved at the highest level in German war planning responsible for the personnel and material equipment of the army<sup>1</sup>

But what if this influential senior officer, who was even being discussed as the new commander-in-chief of the army at the end of 1941, was playing with marked cards?

How could the top leadership plan reliably if the Chief of Army Armament provided inaccurate information?

If FROMM had already provided false armament figures before the start of the Eastern campaign, he was almost exposed on October 4, 1941. HITLER'S army adjutant ENGEL -



reported how the situation came to a head at one of HITLER'S situation conferences. <sup>1</sup> In the presence of General FROMM, a whole range of technical data on armament and military scientific matters was discussed by various officers of the Armaments Office. According to ENGEL, HITLER had shortly before that had the red armament book of the Weapons Office sent to him with the production figures for September 1941. The aim was to get to the bottom of any ambiguities.

Together with a number of negative observations and various statistics, HITLER'S criticism now focused on tank production and the manufacturing figures for the sFH 18 field howitzer.

FROMM provided such confusing figures on this that HITLER made bitter remarks regarding the Waffenamt's figures. He no longer knew whom to trust. How was he to fight a war when he could supposedly count on a thousand additional tanks, and then someone would inform him that he had only 500 at his disposal. He had assumed that at least the Armory people could count, but that was obviously not the case. The independent drafts and elaborations of this office, he said, had characteristics of children's games and in no way dealt with the seriousness of the situation and the struggle for survival in which the German Reich now found itself. He then had telephone calls to Berlin filmed. They confirmed that the Waffenamt figures were correct and those of the Chief of Army Armament were wrong.

FROMM, however, was able to artfully wriggle out of the discussion by explaining to HITLER that he was not the master of his own house in this respect. Rather, he blamed the navy, which would leave the army only what it did not need itself in terms of armaments: "And this will simply no longer be enough, my Führer," were FROMM'S last words.

FROMM! was allowed to continue undisturbed until the summer of 1942.

Thus, on March 25, 1942, Minister GOEBBELS complained to GOERING ABOUT the "disastrous views of Colonel General FROMM, WHO HAS GIVEN me completely false figures, as a result of which the ski collection had to take on such a large size in the first place." <sup>2</sup>

In the summer of 1942, an affair occurred when a conversation between FROMM, the armaments chief of the MILCH Air Force, and Armaments Minister SPEER was leaked to London. In it, the three had expressed the conviction the war was lost. When this was leaked to Berlin, FROMM WAS able to talk his way out of it again during interrogations, although a similar conversation that CANARIS, TODT and (again) FROMM HAD HAD earlier had also >landed< in London and provided headlines in *The Times* on September 17, 1942.

For this reason, too, FROMM WAS viewed with suspicion by the state leadership from September 1942 and systematically deprived of his power.

As commander of the Reserve Army, he was then significantly to withhold some **400000** replacements in the homeland from deployment at the front in **1944 to provide** military cover for the planned coup d'état. <sup>1</sup> In another work it will have to be examined whether this - half million men missing in the summer of **1944** on the fateful battles in Normandy and White Russia would have achieved a different outcome for Germany.

### **A basic condition for betrayal and sabotage: >rubber orders< and falsified information.**

It is indisputable that the availability of reliable information is one of the prerequisites for any successful decision-making. In fact, in the course of the war, from **1941** onward, - deficiencies in the German reporting system increasingly. Thus, reports of different German services on the same facts could widely, even to the point of being outright lies

On December **25, 1941**, Colonel General HALDER had already ordered his staff to explicitly remind the German Army Group and Army Headquarters that their reports had to be truthful.

The problem persisted, however, because on November 7, **1942**, the new Chief of General Staff, ZEITZLER, HAD to issue a basic order to this effect to all command posts. ZEITZLER wrote: "It strikes the Fuehrer that, despite constant indications, reports are still colored according to purpose and are not fully sincere and true, and so are passed on without criticism." ZEITZLER demanded that such practices must stop.

**in** reality, leading generals had already, at least since **1940**, withheld information from the Fuehrer or interpreted his orders to achieve a particular result. General WARLIMONT wrote that the Wehrmacht command staff could occasionally change the form or content of an order to give commanders on the ground some leeway. Subordinate command posts referred to this as >rubber orders< and then had to fudge appropriate messages

**HITLER** seemed to be in despair over these practices. <sup>1</sup> This can be - readily seen from his order of 23 March **1943**. In it, he demanded that no higher authority be prevented from making reports directly to the supreme commander. However, such reports must also be given to the next higher superior so that the latter can express his own opinion by means of additions; the latter, however, must not prevent the direct reporting channel

In this way, he hoped to obtain unfiltered, true information at least about subordinate services in the event of a problem

Of course, purposeful or false reports could also have to do with self-interest or rivalry of the respective commanders. It could never hurt here to exaggerate both one's own strength and the enemy's losses. A clique of officers engaged in treason and sabotage, this naturally opened up

unimagined possibilities

In any case, inaccurate reporting cost the German command system time and affected its ability to make sound decisions

### **Lies in the Fuehrer's Headquarters - already in 1941 cause for basic orders**

In the fall of **1941**, the problem of lies and false reports was recognized at the Fuehrer's headquarters as increasingly pernicious.

This increased to such an extent that on December **26, 1941**, a fundamental Fuehrer order was issued concerning the reporting system in the Wehrmacht. <sup>2</sup> This stated:

"1. Any report - of any kind - is a means of leadership and can provide the impetus for decisive resolution.

2. Every report must therefore be based on the principle of unconditional love of truth and conscientiousness.

3. Each report must also be written in such a way that it gives the superior authority a clear picture of the situation or an unambiguous answer to the questions asked

4. Exaggeration and whitewashing are dangerous. Truthfully reporting unfulfilled demands and one's own mistakes credit to every soldier

5. It is the duty of every superior to check doubtful reports and to work with relentless rigor for compliance with the above principles. Conversely, subordinates must know that reports are only requested where they are actually necessary

Adolf HITLER."

This order was produced and distributed by posting or distribution by handbills in large numbers

The desperate act of late **1941**, however, does not seem to have changed much. Thus Henry PICKER - reported in his seminal work *Hitler's Table Talks at the Fuehrer's Headquarters* under **17 June 1942** that "HITLER'S distrust of the military advisers grew visibly, especially since he had to fret about some officers who were always waiting for orders from above as much as about the first obvious sabotages and the constant misgivings of those military experts who, in his opinion, could only think of examples in every situation in which things had >missed the mark<.

This went so far that HITLER once even unceremoniously sent his army adjutant MAIER-ENGEL forward in an airplane to receive an unvarnished report on a difficult front situation on the Eastern Front. That ENGEL, the later Tiger of Mogilev and Aachen, thanks to his contacts, knowledge of the situation, drive and prudence, by the operational coupling of airplanes and tanks, immediately eliminated the collapse on this front, was for HITLER", according to PICKER, "an however not expected

good news".<sup>1</sup>

The problems at this front section could thus be eliminated. How many other hoaxes were never uncovered must remain unknown.

It has never been known on the part of the Allies, whether British, American or Russian, that their political or military leadership had to order their officers to stop lying to them.

### **The >long awaited setback" is here!**

Major General Henning VON TRESCKOW had been IA of Army Group B since December **10, 1940**, which became >Heeresgruppe Mitte" on June **22, 1941**. VON TRESCKOW was unchallenged the soul and the motor of the subversion headquarters on the Eastern Front

For him, as he said, it was "as certain as the amen in the church" that the campaign against the Soviet Union would have to fail. He expected that HITLER would quickly suffer a defeat at the very beginning of the war against Russia and that the overthrow he had planned would thus become - psychologically and practically possible. He explained to his initiated staff at >Heeresgruppe Mitte< that they still to hold back. First of all, Hitler's winning streak had to be broken before one could successfully strike.

In late 1941, VON TRESCKOW's orderly officer Fabian VON SCHLABRENDORFF traveled to Berlin and spoke to the leading conspirator and active traitor to secrets, General OSTER, as well as Secretary of State von WEIZSÄCKER, the Swedish diplomat Kurt DAMGREN, and Ulrich VON HASSELL. SCHLABRENDORFF told VON HASSELL THAT "they were ready for anything at the Army Group" - whatever "ready for anything" might have meant.<sup>1</sup>

If one believes VON TRESCKOW's biographer Bodo SCHEURIG, the early victories of the Army Group had amazed VON TRESCKOW. Accompanied by the co-conspirator VON SCHLABRENDORFF, he had repeatedly driven to Vörm to ascertain their extent.<sup>2</sup>

Then, in December 1941, Germany suffered the major setback for which the conspirators had been waiting. Even before the turn of events, VON TRESCKOW, WHO also maintained contacts with the head of German enemy intelligence, General GEHLEN, HAD gone to Berlin for a few days. Despite the decisive phase of the fighting of >Heeres- gruppe< Mitte before Moscow, he did not go to the front to his hard-pressed troops, but used an alleged >sick leave< to hold several talks, although he was not seriously ill. The partners with whom he talked remained a secret to this day.

However, VON TRESCKOW told his friend Dr. Karl SILEX, the editor-in-chief of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, at that time: "The war is lost...." "Vyasma had been the last triumph. Now the overall war plan was failing with the fading advance in mud and cold.

Then, in January 1942, under the sign of the winter catastrophe in Russia, the former German ambassador in Rome, Ulrich VON HASSELL, went to General Alexander VON FALKENHAUSEN - (military commander in Belgium and in northern France) in Brussels and to Field Marshal VON WITZLEBEN (Commander-in-Chief West) in Saint-Germain. In agreement with the conspirators OSTER and BECK, he demanded that the coup d'état be carried out by a putsch by FALKENHAUSEN and WITZLEBEN OF

west. However, this was considered utopian by the two commanders due to the lack of suitable troops and was rejected. On the eastern front, there were just as few troops could be trusted with such an uprising.

Meanwhile, the war in the east continued. By March 1942, the Wehrmacht had been able to beat off the great Russian winter offensive to some extent, with terrible losses. Today it is undisputed that HITLER'S halting order could once again spare the German soldiers in the East the fate of NAPOLEON IN 1812.

The response of the conspirators to the new consolidation of the situation at the front and the absence of troops ready for a putsch was to improve their organization. Toward the end of March 1942, the BECK-HASSELL-OSTER-OLBRICHT group, with the help of Jens Peter JESSEN (working for the Quartermaster General), decided that all the threads of the conspiracy should run through BECK.

From the beginning of the great German summer offensive of July 1942, the Berlin headquarters had established, through von SCHLABRENTORFF, a constant link between the conspiratorial centers on the Eastern Front and in Berlin. VON SCHLABRENTORFF frequently traveled back and forth between Smolensk and Berlin. The circles with which he spoke on VON TRESCKOW'S behalf expanded. Even for his friends, VON TRESCKOW increasingly developed into a dazzling personality. According to his biographer SCHEURIG, he would have known "that villainy belonged to the conspirator".

## **The solution to a riddle? Search for the >chief saboteur< in the transport industry**

In the postwar period, even critical voices hardly dared to name former saboteurs and traitors in high-ranking positions. This invisible protective shield applied even to those who had admitted their >heroic deeds<.

Erwin GOLDMANN, FOR example, reported on a case involving the sabotage of vital supplies: "Em Ritterkreuzträger Oberst i. G. von P. stated that, as chief of the transport department of the OKW, he had deliberately some of the winter equipment to southern France during the first severe Russian winter. At other times he would have led task forces for the East crisscrossing Germany to prevent their timely arrival at the front. How many soldiers' lives and health did he have on his conscience?"<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, the author did not communicate >when< and >to whom< this statement was made. Let us therefore try to solve this riddle.

In fact, the position of >Chief of Transportation< existed in the Army High Command from October **30, 1935**. This division of the Army General Staff in Berlin mobilized on August **19, 1939**. The Transport Department then had responsibility for the transportation of the entire Wehrmacht by rail, road, and inland waterways. Its commander also had the supplies for the Eastern Front in his hands.

However, there was no "Ritterkreuzträger Oberst i. G. von P." as chief of the transport department of the OKW.

In reality, Rudolf Ernst Otto GERCKE had headed this crucial department since July **1935**.

On October **1, 1937**, GERCKE was promoted to Colonel i. G., and on October **1, 1939**, to Major General. On September **25, 1943**, he was awarded the Knight's Cross. GERCKE exercised his function as Chief of the Transport Department of the OKW until **1945**.

There was no one else who held this leadership position during the time in question<sup>1</sup>

Does this solve the mystery?

During the war, GERCKE was repeatedly attacked for incompetence, errors and omissions. He worked exclusively at his desk and, as transport chief, had never the difficulties on ground in the East<sup>2</sup>

Instead, he found ways and means to successfully avoid confrontation with harsh reality, which his officers and the railroad workers rightly resented very much, as the standard work on railroads in World War II wrote.

In the spring of 1943, HITLER considered replacing the chief of the transport department of the OKW, who had been criticized from all sides for his incompetence. But this was not the

case! Rather, GERCKE remained in his post until the surrender. Although it is astonishing especially in his case, he was the only head of a general staff department who held his position from the beginning to the end of the war.

Was his much lamented >incapacity< ultimately the result of deliberate sabotage in the German transport system?

So far, no one has raised the evidentiary question of whether the search for the suspected >chief saboteur of P< can be considered resolved.

GERCKE died in American captivity in 1947. Was it there that he made the confessions mentioned by GOLDMANN?

Nothing could be found out about the exact circumstances that led to GERCKE's death in an American military hospital. Natural cause, arranged accident (witness removal) or Feme murder? Perhaps the truth will eventually come to light.

### **Accident or Sabotage: The Mysterious Crash of Reich Minister Dr. Fritz Todt**

On February 7, 1942, Reich Minister of Armaments and Munitions Dr. Fritz TODT crashed - shortly after takeoff from the airfield of the Führer's headquarters in Rastenburg. There had been no survivors in the impact fire of his Heinkel He-111. The minister's death generated great sympathy in Germany.

The engineer Dr. Fritz TODT was one of the most capable organizers of the Third Reich and possessed great popularity at home and abroad. On March 17, 1940, HITLER had appointed the successful autobahn and bru-

for armament and ammunition. ToDT was also in charge of the Chief Office of - Technology, and thus all major technological tasks important to armament efforts of the Third Reich were under its control.

How far his scope of work extended is shown by the fact that he had to continue his original activities of road construction. Thus, he was responsible for the construction of new roads from the north of Norway to the south of France.

TOOTS appointment brought in sharp contrast to General THOMAS in the OKW and the Wehrmacht procurement authorities, whose influence was waning.

Until then, the High Command of the Wehrmacht, under the leadership of General THOMAS, had attempted to pull uniform control of the German war economy to itself in competition with the Weapons Offices, the Wehrmacht staffs, and the civilian economic departments. After the first clear failure of the Wehrmacht economic officers in the spring of 1940, the

strive for more control.

appointment of TOOTS again gave the impression

TOOT and his staff then also found chaos and miscalculation of incredible proportions in army armament.<sup>1</sup>

Since April 1941, lies and disinformation had given the top German leadership a false impression of the strength of the army's equipment. Thus, in view of the first victories in Russia, the army was considered to be so well equipped that in the summer of 1941 the already insufficient army equipment was to be cut back in favor of the air force and navy, even if, due to speed of changeover, scrap would result from the new production of >^unnecessary< army equipment!

In reality, the result was only further chaos, with the Army getting fewer weapons and the Air Force not getting more planes.

If one wanted to lose a war, one would have had to do exactly as the armament planners around THOMAS, OLBRICHT and FROMM DID. Dr. TODT DID NOT learn the full truth about the state of equipment of the Eastern Army until much later; nevertheless, it was clear to him even at the beginning that the approach here was not victory-oriented.

Under TOOT'S direction, the outlines of many of the measures that would later lead to a great increase in German armaments, munitions, and war production under TOOT'S successor, Albert SPEER, WERE already being developed.

In November 1941, in response to General GUDERIAN'S demands, the minister had sent



Walter ROHLAND, the leader of the main committee on tank production, and Hans KEHRL TO GUDERIAN's headquarters in Orel. GUDERIAN had previously requested that a commission be sent to his front as soon as possible, consisting of representatives of the Army Armaments Office, the Armaments Ministry, tank designers, and tank-building firms. This commission was to discuss the spot and under the impression of the shattered German tanks on the battlefield the conditions imposed on a future new construction of German tanks. The accelerated production of a heavy Panzer defense with sufficient penetrating power against the armor of the T-34 was also demanded.

The commission from Germany appeared at the Second Panzer Army on November 20. Now the miserable truth about the inadequate equipment and insufficient supplies on the Eastern Front came to light. Both equipment and clothing were totally inadequate for the freezing conditions that prevailed in Russia. Tanks and vehicles froze, and soldiers were desperate to wrap themselves in rags and bed sheets to protect some extent against the cold. The commission was shocked.

After ROHLAND's return, he confronted TODT with the truth in a conference on November 28, 1941, and stated that the war against Russia could not be won under these circumstances. The very next day ROHLAND and TODT hurried to HITLER. There ROHLAND repeated his terrible findings from Russia. Dr. TODT, HITLER's friend, then insisted that the war could no longer be won militarily, but only politically. HITLER himself had already discussed this possibility with Minister GOEBBELS in August 1941.

After the inspection tour of ROHLAND's tank commission, TODT thus learned what had been kept secret from him until then. The mass of German armaments produced in 1941 was about to be lost on the battlefields in the East. In many areas, the Wehrmacht was thrown back to the armaments level of 1940 and in some areas even to the level of September 1, 1939. For example, on January 1, 1942, the German Army Office still had 3383 tanks ready for front-line use, while the Wehrmacht was still able to fight the attack on Poland with 3506 armored vehicles.

When TODT and ROHLAND communicated these data to HITLER, he realized that the period of blitzkrieg was finally over and that Germany might be facing a long war of attrition similar to the situation of 1914-18. HITLER was therefore now prepared to take drastic measures in the armaments sector: addition to an immediate redirection of armaments in favor of the army, a fundamental restructuring of the German war economy was also initiated that German war production should finally be centrally controlled. In this context, the question of military (General THOMAS) or civilian domination (Tom / Arms Industry) came to the fore.

Until then, a stalemate had prevailed throughout the summer and fall of 1941 between the Reich Ministry of Munitions and Armaments and General THOMAS's Wehrmacht. Sole decisions were not possible in this (intended?) chaotic competitive thinking between the Wehrmacht

components prevented a possible and urgently needed increase in the production of armaments. On September 11, 1941, HITLER had demanded that the armaments programs be harmonized with each other and brought into line with the production capacities of industry.<sup>1</sup> General THOMAS did nothing. He had >more important things< to do and in early September 1941 made a series of personal visits to the army groups in the East. In the process, he had unsuccessfully tried to promote a coup in the Reich.<sup>2</sup>

From mid-November 1941, it became increasingly clear that the Barbarossa enterprise could not be successfully completed by the end of the year. The attempt to achieve victory on the Eastern Front in 1942 or later, however, inevitably presupposed a renewed ^extensive army buildup. Time was rushing, and decisions had to be made.

General THOMAS had therefore attempted to assert his institution's claim to leadership with two major memoranda. He wanted to preserve his influence on the war economy by reflecting HITLER IN A similar way as in the spring of 1941 by an overly optimistic forecast about the prospects of success of the operation in the East and the achievements of the military economic organization. Furthermore, in November 1941 THOMAS had the work of his economic officers publicized as a great success through a large-scale press campaign via the Wehrwirtschafts- und Rüstungsamt. Doing so, he attested to himself "outstanding achievements"

HITLER, however, now agreed with ROHLAND and TODT, and when Armaments Minister TODT presented HITLER WITH his own proposals for rationalizing German armaments production at the end of January 1942, he beat THOMAS TO THE PUNCH. system of "self-responsibility of industry," with which the armaments industrialists threatened to oust OKW and the arms offices once and for all from responsibility development and production of armaments materials

With HITLER'S approval, Dr. TODT now wanted to completely reorganize the German armaments industry. He concentrated on rallying Germany's industrial bosses around him in order to renew once again the fighting strength of the Wehrmacht, which had been completely depleted by the failure of the old system, represented by Generals THOMAS, FROMM and OLBRICHT. Did he thereby pass his own death sentence?

On February 6, 1942, Dr. TODT again went to Rastenburg to meet HITLER. Unfortunately, apart from rumors, no reports have survived of what the two discussed

However, according to ROHLAND, it seems that in the post-war period, a political solution to end the war was once again at stake. Whether HITLER and Dr. TODT argued with each other, as was often claimed in the postwar period, is completely unknown. After the conversation, - according to witnesses, Dr. TODT seemed very depressed.

Dr. TODT'S personal twin-engine He-111 was undergoing routine inspection. He was therefore lent his personal Heinkel He-111 aircraft to his friend, Luftwaffe General Hugo Sperrle.

HITLER had previously banned all prominent Nazi officials from flying in twin-engine aircraft on principle. After HITLER'S Luftwaffe adjutant VON BELOW HAD HEARD about the new aircraft of Dr. TODT'S

he felt compelled to draw the attention of the Reich Minister of Armaments to this prohibition and to forbid him to take off with the He- 111. Hm.ER was persuaded by TODT, however, and gave VON BELOW THE instruction to see to it that Dr. TOOT's plane was dispatched appropriately the next morning.

To be on the safe side, Nikolaus VON BELOW arranged for the aircraft to make a test flight with the minister before takeoff. <sup>1</sup> When everything was in order, the Minister took off, but crashed in flames only a few minutes after takeoff. Witnesses had seen a jet flame coming from the rear of the fuselage just before the plane exploded. This indicated that an explosive charge had been detonated.

On HITLER's orders, the Reich Air Ministry and the SD now had to investigate the cause of the mysterious crash.

Despite all the oddities, the commission, led by an Air Force lieutenant general, concluded that the possibility of sabotage was ruled out. The accident could not be explained. Further measures, however, were neither necessary nor intended.

This official report about Dr. TOOT's crash has disappeared until today. However, there are indications that a copy may be in the hands of the US Army. If this is so, the question arises why the report has not been published until today. There could be something here that is to remain further in the dark.

HITLER was very much affected by Dr. TOOT's crash. He often seemed very nervous and dejected when the subject was discussed in his presence later - until one day he announced the following about it: "I don't want to hear any more about it. I forbid further discussion of this matter. You know that this loss affects me much too deeply to want to talk about it."

To this day, there is a debate about who is to blame for the crash of the ever-popular Dr. TODT. Of course, in the postwar period, HITLER - himself was accused of being behind the alleged bombing of his friend.

Also an accident hypothesis had to be used for clarification, according to which the self-destruction mechanism of the machine was accidentally triggered by Dr. TOOT. This version was already circulating during the Third Reich.

From the modern American side, the anti-Hitler movement of the German Reich is also suspected especially the military resistance, which was hindered by Dr. TOOT's powerful position in the Reich armament industry. <sup>2</sup> It also appears that Dr. TODT, for his part, had already

extended peace feelers abroad.<sup>1,2</sup> This, too, was not likely to have made him popular with the military resistance.

In any case, Dr. TODT must have sensed that his life was in danger. Shortly before his death, he deposited a large sum of money in a safe intended for his personal secretary as a thank-you for many years of service. He remarked that he did this as a precaution in case something happened to him.

The likelihood that Dr. TODT was assassinated by his opponents in the High Command of the Wehrmacht is further supported by the fact that his later successor Albert SPEER and Josef NECKERMANN were originally also supposed to be on board the blown-up He-111 for the fateful flight back to Berlin. Fortunately for them, one of them overslept the departure, while the other arrived too late at the airfield.

If they had crashed together, the armaments planning of the Third Reich would have been deprived of its leading minds.

Unfortunately for his opponents, Dr. Albert SPEER then became the sole successor to the crashed Reich Minister. Whatever the perpetrators of Dr. TODT's crash had hoped for, SPEER succeeded in raising German armaments to unimaginable heights thanks to TODT's groundwork.

Incidentally, TODT's crash showed suspicious parallels to at least three other fatal plane crashes during the Third Reich.

They took place in 1944 and will be dealt with together with possible cause and suspected perpetrators in the following volume

### **The >Stalingrad Putsch<**

Is there any explanation for what bad things had happened to the **6th** Army? When Generaloberst BECK was pointed to the great German victories on the Don and the Caucasus in the summer of 1942, he rejected them as "prolonging the war". According to Friedrich LENZ, he was waiting for the long-awaited replacement of this period of victory by one of defeat.<sup>3</sup>

Then, when the **6th** Army's grip on Stalingrad became apparent after the Russian offensive of November 19, 1942, the flurry of activity began at BECK's headquarters. The double agent GISEVIUS, whom General OSTER had delegated to Switzerland with the approval of Admiral CANARIS to cultivate relations with the Allies, was recalled to Berlin in early December 1942, and arrangements were made for the so-called >Stalingrad Putsch<. GISEVIUS testified about it under oath at the Nuremberg court: "Having failed to persuade the victorious generals to stage a putsch, we tried to persuade them at least to stage a putsch when they were manifestly running into their great catastrophe. This catastrophe, which found its first visible expression in Stalingrad, had been foreseen in every detail by Colonel General BECK since December 1942. Immediately we made all preparations to organize a military coup at the time which could be foreseen almost with mathematical accuracy, when PAUL's army would have to surrender completely defeated. I myself brought back from Switzerland at that time part in all the talks and preparations. I can only testify to the fact that this time a great

deal was really prepared, and contact was also established with the field marshals in the East and with WITZLEBEN in the West; but again, things turned out differently."

GISEVIUS continued: "Against all expectations, Field Marshal PAULUS - surrendered. As is known, this is the first great mass surrender of generals, while we had expected that PAULUS with his generals before his surrender would issue an appeal to the German people and to the Eastern Front, in which HITLER'S strategy and the abandonment of the Stalingrad Army was branded with due words.

On this cue, Field Marshal General VON KLUGE WAS to declare that in the future he would no longer take military orders from HITLER. With this construction, we hoped to circumvent the problem of the oath, which was causing us more and more trouble, by having one field marshal after another refuse military obedience to HITLER, whereupon BECK would take over the military supreme command in Berlin."

An air force officer who flew in specially to the cauldron is said to have delivered a corresponding letter from Generaloberst BECK to Field Marshal - PAULUS, but the latter "does not want to have received it."

What deserves special attention in this confession of the double agent GISEVIUS IS THAT "this time really a lot was prepared". GISEVIUS testified about it under oath:

- Colonel General BECK had soon made contact with one, soon with the other field marshal.
- General VON TRECKOW and Lieutenant Colonel Graf VON DER SCHULENBURG had gone to MANSTEIN'S headquarters.
- General FELLGIEBEL OF the intelligence forces had laid a special line from BECK'S headquarters to General OLBRICHT in the OKW.
- Firm arrangements had been made with Field Marshal VON WITZLEBEN for the launching of a coup in the West.
- Firm agreements with the military governor of Belgium, Colonel General VON FALKENHAUSEN, would have existed.
- Certain contingents of armored troops in the vicinity of Berlin had been assembled.
- Those troop commanders to act in this action already assembled in the OKH
- From this it becomes clear that, similarly to the retreat from Moscow, the >lost victory< of Stalingrad was again to be the triggering moment for a well-prepared military coup.

The question therefore arises why Field Marshal PAULUS had not reacted

accordingly. According to Friedrich LENZ's opinion, the conscientious PAULUS WAS able to realize that in case of an unauthorized outbreak a civil war and the collapse of the entire Eastern Front with much greater losses would be the automatic consequence. Why should he burden himself with such responsibilities, when by law it was someone else, namely his legal superior, who had them.

Even in the case of an outbreak of PAULUS against HITLER's order as a beacon to the >Putsch of Stalingrad<, the big question is whether enough troops would have been willing to undertake an uprising against their comrades at all. Already after the defeat before Moscow in 1941, it had turned out in the summer of 1942 *that there were* enough officers but too few combat troops who would have participated.

However, for the soldiers of the 6th Army who died in Stalingrad and later in Russian captivity, such considerations may have been meaningless.

### **Subtle resistance? The Secret of Gehlen's Situation Reports**

The strangely wrong situation reports of General GEHLEN raise questions. Apparently there was only incompetence and disinterest at the Abteilmg >Fremde Heere Ost<, or was there something else behind it? GEHLEN's duties as IC officer and his deputy Alexis VON DER ROENNE - included daily briefings to the Army High Command on the situation on the secret reconnaissance front. Only through a precise knowledge of the enemy's strength as well as his movements and intentions was it General Staff make its decisions, to launch its own attacks or to thwart enemy offensive intentions.

In this respect, German warfare was particularly dependent on the loyalty of these men. GEHLEN WAS certainly one of HITLER's political opponents, as was his deputy Alexis VON DER ROENNE.

In the winter of 1941 /42, Henning VON TRECKOW is said to have spoken openly to GEHLEN. VON TRECKOW, however, considered GEHLEN TO BE "slippery and unreliable" in the sense of the conspiracy, just as one would imagine an experienced secret service man to be. In 1943, GEHLEN was - initiated into the assassination preparations by General HEUSINGER. He also knew as early as July 17 or 18, 1944, that the assassination attempt on HITLER was to take place on July 20, 1944. He also knew all details about other attempted assassinations on Mr. ERS life and was fully aware of the intrigues in the headquarters of the >Heeresgruppe Mitte< so dangerous for the German warfare.

Sphinx-like and slick, however, he avoided any appearance of active participation in the conspiracy. In 1945 and also in the post-war period he

admitted that he had indeed been an active part of the resistance.<sup>1,3</sup> In his memoirs, published in 1971, he affirmed: "High treason must remain high treason. It can only be ethically justified - and this is the only conceivable case for me - by a special national emergency. With my brothers who dared the last I recognize this state of emergency as given and HITLER'S - ruinous leadership."

question therefore arises whether the suppression of news or intelligence and other measures favoring the enemy, such as false reports, are also part of this, especially if the death of one's own soldiers or the defeat of one's own country are intended or We can no longer ask the general this question today

General GEHLEN continued his activities as an agent chief in the postwar period first for the Americans, then for the new Federal Republic of Germany. Immediately after his capture in 1945, the Americans treated GEHLEN with the utmost courtesy. They accepted his assurances that he had never been a >Nazi<. Some important people in Washington felt that his personal brand of subtle opposition to HITLER contained more sense than the perhaps idealism of some July 20 - conspirators.

Many of GEHLEN'S friends, such as VON DER ROENNE and VON RITBERG, who had worked more directly in the conspiracy, were dead, while GEHLEN remained alive, with sources intact and preserved.

Von GEHLEN then continued his work of espionage, subversion and infiltration in East and West until 1968. Smooth as an eel, he not only continued to work for his new employers, but also carried out many missions that were in direct opposition to their interests. Thus, he not only spied regularly against >Communists< around the world, but also installed his agents among his former American employers and the Allied friends of the German government.

In the case of France, GEHLEN'S people not only worked closely with French intelligence and supported ADENAUER'S friend DE GAULLE, but actively operated simultaneously in favor of DE GAULLE'S military opposition. Such activities against official Bonn policy then brought about the premature end of GEHLEN'S active official activity in the spring of 1968, although he had correctly predicted the coming Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia as late as May 1968.<sup>1</sup>

On June 8, 1979, GEHLEN, one of the most legendary spy chiefs of the Cold War, died. It is doubtful that he ever thought much of transcendental values and democratic freedoms. Information gathering, passing, and acting behind the scenes were his specialties. During the Cold War, he, along with his former Abwehr, SS, and Gestapo associates working under him for Americans and Germans, earned great credit for the West. The question, therefore, is how many soldiers of the German Eastern Army would have remained alive and not been taken prisoner if GEHLEN HAD worked as effectively on the Eastern Front as he did after 1945.



## The >Sphinx<. What did the German Chief of Staff really want?

Farther from that, the strange actions of Chief of Staff General HALDER HAVE been repeatedly uncovered, which seemed to work towards a German victory.

To this day, scholars argue about the role that German Chief of Staff Franz HALDER played in the resistance against HITLER.

It is certain that in the fall of **1939**, after the end of the Polish campaign, Chief of Staff HALDER gavethe starting signal for the preparation of the coup d'état. Civilian opposition members were actively involved in the military coup planningsuch as the jurist VON DOHNANYI, the confessional priestDietrich BONHOEFFER AS well as Josef MÜLLER, the confidant of the Catholic Church, were drafted as officers or special leaders for the defense of Admiral CANARIS and strengthened the circle around Colonel (later General) OSTER.

Admiral CANARIS sent Major GROSCURTH TO Chief of Staff HalderasAbwehrliaison officerat the OKH. GROSCURTH, together with the group around OSTER, entered into contact with the circle around BECK and GOERDELER. FROM A technical point of view, the coup plan was relatively far-reaching, but it failed because HALDER and his co-conspirators did not succeed in winning over Army Commander-in-Chief VON BRAUCHITSCH and the three top front commanders to the coup plan.

In **1940**, HALDER >officially< withdrew from the military resistanceHowever, he remained in close contact with the resistance circles

His role must best be described as ambiguous and Janus-faced

Thus, according to today's account, he had the coup d'état plans - carried out in **1939**, allegedly in order to prevent an expansion of the war.This claimed war limitation and war termination policyby coup d'état is contradicted by a document find in the former Moscow Special Archive.According to this document, Chief of General Staff HALDER - played a warmongering role in a speech in the spring of **1939**. **There** is also evidence that he had repeatedly and surprisingly clearly solicited - foreign policypressure on HITLER IN talks with foreign diplomats and military officers.<sup>1</sup>

This means that the extremely intelligent German Chief of Staffbe the leading planner of the deut-

At the same time, he held warmongering speeches in Germany in the spring of 1939 and tried to induce the Western powers, as potential enemies, to take a firm and threatening stance against HITLER BY diplomatic means, only to feverishly prepare a coup d'état to >end the war< after the outbreak of war.

Similarly puzzling and at least ambiguous is the attitude he - displayed in 1940/42 in the preparation and conduct of the Eastern campaign.

If HALDER could have cooperated with the Allies similar to CANARIS, his >mysterious< actions are immediately explained, while outwardly he proclaimed toughness to the enemy.

Released by HITLER on September 29, 1942, he was arrested and interned in connection with the investigation following July 20, 1944.

In the 1946 Nuremberg Show Trial, HALDER appeared as a prosecution witness against the High Command of the Wehrmacht. HALDER then spent fourteen comfortable years after the war as the distinguished head of the German section of the U.S. Army's War History Research Group.

There he played a decisive role in shaping the image of how we are to see the history of the Second World War from a >Western perspective<. In contrast to the modern MGFA, he was the guiding principle that the German troops should be memorialized, but not without >rewriting< events in the sense of and for the benefit of the former German general staff (of which he was the chief). That also and especially the interests of the Western war opponents to have been duly taken into account is shown by the following:

When the department was disbanded in 1961, U.S. President - KENNEDY awarded General HALDER THE >U.S. Meritorious Civilian Service Medal<, the highest honor that a non-American can achieve in government service there! Such an honor had to be "earned".<sup>1</sup>

Today, the man who - willingly or >accidentally< - may have had a considerable share in the "lost victory" of Germany in the East in 1941 / 42, is virtually berated by West German MGFA historians like Wolfram WEITE for having propagated a too pro-German position in his historiography.<sup>2</sup>

## **Outlook**

## Not every mistake was treason

It would be completely wrong and distorting history to try to explain every mistake that occurred on the side of the Wehrmacht in the Eastern campaign with >treason< and >sabotage<.

every war, mistakes, errors and the famous frictions- even often several times with the same people These can have disastrous consequences for entire countries. This was already the case in the past. There is a saying that wars are always won by the side that makes the fewest mistakes.

In addition, there were shortages and numerical inferiority in the Wehrmacht, which for this reason alone could cope with fewer >mistakes< than the Allies.

It is somewhat different, however, with the systematic >mistakes and merk- worthies< that have been presented in this book. Here, a rather small group of people actively worked against the war effort of their own country. Their goal was not to avoid defeats of their own side, but to promote them.

With the exception of the betrayal of the Italian fleet in the Mediterranean 1940/1943 by Italian admirals, there is probably little historical comparison to the actions of high-ranking German aides to the Allies<sup>1</sup>

Of course, the attempt can also be made here to explain alleged acts of treason as blatant blunders or human. Thus, in the case of the dropping of condoms in supply bombs over the Stalingrad cauldron, it was argued that they had just accidentally packed >staged goods<. Obviously, this mistake had no consequences for those responsible. Promptly, under the direction of the same colonel, the German paratroopers in Normandy, who were suffering from severe supply problems, again received condoms instead of weapons and ammunition in the summer of 1944. There are just such things as "coincidences" in life!

Such machinations were facilitated by HITLER'S oral style of government. He allowed so-called >errors of interpretation< and confusions on a large scale, so that basically nobody could say authentically and with certainty what HITLER had actually ordered orally. This led to sometimes blatant and deliberate changes of the >fuhrer's will<, whereby the traitors liked to use the >overinterpretation< of such orders if necessary, in order not to be able to be caught.<sup>2</sup>

Entire orders were falsified, so that until 1945 several cases have been handed down in which HITLER subsequently denied ever having issued a Führer instruction that had been recalled him.<sup>1</sup>

One example is HITLER'S order that German soldiers should be equipped only with the best weapons. This allowed interested circles prevent any simplification in favor of possible mass production or the adoption of robust enemy looted weapons into their own arsenal as they saw fit

It was also important that the suspicious group of people covered for each other. The head of the personnel office, General **SCHMUNDT**, said: "They stick together like peanuts, they sabotage the orders of the Führer wherever they can. Of course, they always do it in such a way that nothing can be proved against them; they constantly throw sand into the machinery of our Wehrmacht. One of them covers for the other. Officers who do not belong to their circle, they try to cold. For example, SEYDLITZ had managed to keep General LIEB, WHO HAD now earned the oak leaf in the Cherkassy Kessel and who had proved himself to be a particularly capable commander of troops since until recently in the post of a city commander of Frankfurt. But they simply cannot be dealt with."<sup>2</sup>

So, indeed, not every German mistake in the Eastern campaign was treason, but just behind many decisive >normal< mistakes and errors, on closer inspection, there is another cause!

**The time of the >burnt earth< -  
this was the name given to the battle on the Eastern Front after  
Stalingrad.**

When the Wehrmacht stood at the gates of Moscow in the fall of **1941**, victory seemed only a matter of time. Soviet survival belied the expectations of almost all observers. Thus, even the sober United States Joint Chiefs of Staff opined at the time that "Germany would be preoccupied with conquering Russia for a minimum of one month and a possible maximum of three."<sup>3</sup>

So how did the Red Army manage to turn the tide? Even research in the **21st** century has turned to this question and, according to modern authors from the English-speaking world, has not yet reached an agreement.<sup>4</sup>

While the Western Allied authors claim to this day that only the massive Anglo-American resupply could have

Russians survived the critical phase 1941-42 (topic outside this work!), German generals proclaimed after 1945 that HITLER'S unpredictable warfare and lack of weapons and equipment had made defeat inevitable.

All these theses do not really fit the facts, so that modern international science in the 21st century is still looking for explanations.<sup>1</sup>

The question must therefore be whether Germany could have been defeated without high-level treachery and sabotage in the East as it then was.

defeat of the Germans at Stalingrad quickly became a legend. It did not have a truly strategic, war-decisive role.

The successful German counteroffensives in the Kharkov area in March 1943 made it clear that the Wehrmacht had lost an important battle, but by no means the war.<sup>2</sup>

"What took place on the Eastern Front between the Battle of Stalingrad and the >End- kampf< in 1945 is one of the great, hitherto little-noticed dramas of military history. "<sup>3</sup> This sentence by Karl-Heinz FRIESSER shows that the worst period for Europe had only just begun when Field Marshal PAULUS had to lay down his arms in the cauldron of Stalingrad.

Perhaps with the exception of the Battle of Kursk, this period in particular has hardly attracted any broader interest among scholars, which makes one wonder whether something is not being concealed here

In the spring of 1943, the Wehrmacht had once again succeeded in driving back the Russian shock armies in the south and near Kharkov, so that at least a draw was in the cards in the battle on the Eastern Front. Then came the Battle of Kursk, parts of which remain a mystery to this day.

But even after the Battle of Kursk, the Red Army laboriously won Pyrrhic victories, as the German Empire was still capable of inflicting 10:1 losses on the enemy

The superior fighting strength of German troops was repeatedly weakened by strange occurrences. Today, this is interpreted by >modern< German authors such as the MGFA of the Bundeswehr as the result of German mistakes: HITLER'S allegedly poor strategic skills, sloppy enemy reconnaissance, logistical overstretch and fuel shortages. None of these interpretations does justice to reality.

Ukraine was lost in November **1943** under circumstances reminiscent of the events at Stalingrad in **1942** the year before. In the catastrophic setback that Germany suffered in Belarus in the summer of **1944**, some things were not quite right either.

However, this should not be discussed today any more than the background to the collapse of the Wehrmacht in Romania in August **1944** - and the Russian success at Baranov in January **1945**, **which was** promoted by German traitors. It heralded the beginning of the end of the Third Reich.

However, it seems to be a scientific challenge to finally present the truth to a public here.

When Germany started the last big offensive in Hungary in March **1945**, the Russians were already waiting for the SS tankswell prepared by

treachery.

Suspicious silence prevails to this day about mysterious plane crashes of high personalities in the summer of **1944**.

Promising German weapons developments were just as the Soviets were promptly informed of German nuclear tests in **1945** through treachery.

The most thought-provoking fact, however, is that in **1943** and **1944** there were again serious chances of concluding a separate peace with Russia that would have been favorable for Germany.

One thing is clear: the war in the East in **1941-45** was of such a magnitude and was fought with such acrimony that a description of it humbles anyone concerned with it, as Richard OVERY rightly wrote....

### **The concealed betrayal**

More than **70** years after the start of the pre-emptive strike against Russia on June **22, 1941**, the world is still waiting for the secret side of this fateful event for Europe and the world to come to terms with.

It is well known that every war has a political, economic and military side. However, secret side, i.e. the events behind the scenes, is only talked about when it seems politically opportune for the victor.

Many have already tried to explain the militarily, economically, politically and ideologically decisive reasons for the German defeat in the war against Russia:

We are concerned here with events that did not take place on the battlefield, but which caused tremendous losses.

The subject of betrayal in World War II on the German side in the East is either entirely >forgotten< or at best trivialized by modern historians. Even the most conscientious historians such as Sir Basil LIDDELL-HART express themselves inaccurately here. <sup>1</sup>

When high German military officers expressed their true opinion the face of death, such as Colonel General Alfred Jom at Nuremberg, their statements were suppressed. An example is provided here by Percy E. SCHRAMM, professor of history, who published his book *Hitzler als mangelnder Führer* in 1962 at Athenäum-Verlag. When SCHIMM dealt with JODL, he noted in a note of concern to a historian: "I (SCHRAMM) omit Jom's subsequent words: >and with an intelligence service that worked in part for the enemy< in the text because JODL had made a distorted picture in this respect." This shows how German postwar historians dealt, or had to deal, with the subject of betrayal in World War II. It was not Colonel General JODL WHO distorted his



statement here, but Prof. Schramm should have respected the statement of the Colonel General who was demonstrably innocent and sentenced to death as a historian should.

An 'invisible hand' thus seems to protect suspected traitors on the Eastern Front to this day

It was necessary to prevent a new stab-in-the-back legend like the one after 1918! When it was necessary to mention these discoveries, the German press played a sad role. Thus, the historian Walter Görlitz tried to diminish or minimize possible consequences in his article "Did German Generals Decide the War as Traitors" (*Die Welt*, March 15, 1966).

This blinkered mentality is characteristic of our modern politically correct historiography. Norman Davies called it in his excellent work *Die große Katastrophe. Europa to the War 1939-45* rightly the "rigid perspective of victors' history." It is perpetuated, Davies said, by commentators who are still writing in the year 2000 what they wrote in 1950.

It therefore seemed necessary to examine, with today's knowledge, extent to which resistance and omissions, as well as betrayals by persons in positions of responsibility contributed to the loss of the war

It is obvious that the continuing massive betrayal, which was directed against Germany even before the outbreak of war, cannot be held solely responsible for the German defeat. This is already evident from the fact that the Wehrmacht was able to achieve its great victories in 1939-41 despite all these secret operations. In the East, too, the Red Army was able to be held off by the Wehrmacht for a very long time, despite the tremendous acts of sabotage and treachery

Although the Red Army was informed about all German plans in time, the Russian leadership had to watch impotently at first as their armies were beaten, surrounded and destroyed one after the other, despite the tremendous material superiority of their own side. Also, without the mud in October/November 1941, the war would probably have been decided in Germany's favor, despite all the treachery, even in Russia.

This is where the principle of the 'secret scales' comes into play. Leadership, willpower and fighting ability of the Wehrmacht could the enemy superiority even in unfavorable terrain up to a certain degree. But if this degree was exceeded, these factors could only achieve local successes, but by no means a decisive victory. Here, the